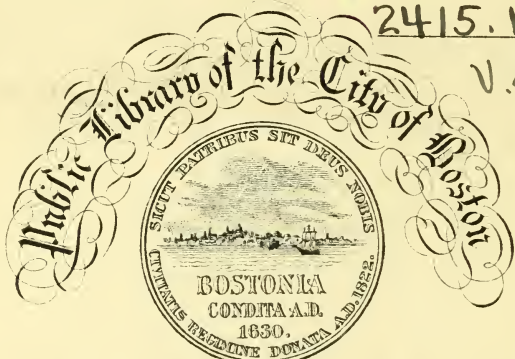


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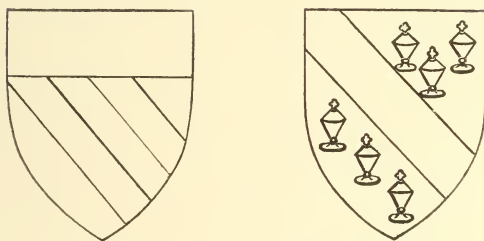
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From the Bates Fund.

HISTORY
OF
WARRINGTON FRIARY.

EDITED BY
WILLIAM BEAMONT, ESQ.



COATS OF ARMS ON THE FRIARY SEAL,
24th June, A.D. 1422.
Vide pp. 34, 35.

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P R E F A C E .

“The sacred tapers’ lights are gone,
Grey moss has clad the altar stone,
The holy image is overthrown,
The bell has ceased to toll ;
The long ribb’d aisles are burst and sunk,
The holy shrines to ruin sunk,
Departed is the pious monk,
A blessing on his soul.”

(SIR WALTER SCOTT.)

IT is a matter of some surprise that, while the history of the larger religious houses in England has received so much attention, and been so thoroughly investigated, the history of those of the several orders of friars has been so little attended to as to have almost escaped notice. Dugdale and Tanner, in their exhaustive works, have left us abundant memorials of the Cisterrians, Benedictines, Premonstratensians, Canons Regular, and others of the like kind ; but of the Franciscans, Carthusians, Hermit Friars and other mendicant orders they have written but little, which is the more strange as the houses of the latter were almost always placed in or near populous towns, and so came more under observation ; while the others, avoiding all such neighbourhoods, affected privacy and a remote seclusion.

A little reflection, however, will suffice to show us some of the reasons which attracted the attention of the great monastic writers so exclusively to the larger houses. The members of these rich orders exhibited in their architecture and the other arts a high degree of taste and refinement. They built magnificent churches, were lodged in rich and noble houses, and maintained great outward state. To enable them to do all this they industriously sought endowments wherever they could; and hence they reaped an abundant store of charters, which, with their beautiful works in stone, have been the materials from which their historians have traced their history throughout its whole progress from its beginning to its close. It was not so, however, with the mendicant orders; for they, disclaiming endowments and professing to live on alms, had scarcely any charters to show, while their houses were often mean and small, so that neither in their charters nor their buildings had they many memorials to leave behind them. And yet in their day, and while their religious zeal continued in its first fervour, their influence was not small; they were more accessible, mixed more with the mass of the people than the higher clergy, whether secular or regular, and their ministrations in sickness, distress or sorrow were more acceptable.

“In misery’s darkest cavern known
Their useful care was ever nigh;
Where hopeless anguish poured his groan,
Or lonely want retired to die.”

The hermit friars of the order of Saint Augustine had a house in Warrington, and although we do not know the exact reasons which first brought them there it is not difficult to conjecture some of them. The first house of canons regular of the order of Saint Augustine ever established in England was that founded early in the eleventh century by Henry I. at Nostell in Yorkshire. Religious novelties were of rapid growth in that age, and the new order soon numbered no less than fifty-three houses in England. The zeal, but not the popularity, of these canons regular had begun to wane before the middle of the thirteenth century; and when William Fitz Almeric le Boteler, the lord of Warrington at that time, was minded to found a religious house there, his choice fell upon the hermit friars of the order of Saint Augustine, then newly introduced into England, who, with the good name of Saint Augustine, had all the zeal which had distinguished the canons of his order at the beginning. But his choice was further influenced by some local circumstances. Winwick church, the one nearest to Warrington on the north, was then in the possession of the canons regular of Saint Augustine at Nostell, while the church of Norton, almost as near to Warrington on the south, was also in the possession of the canons of the same order at Norton priory. The neighbourhood indeed might then be said to be almost Augustinian.

The rule of Saint Augustine, which the Warrington friars followed, bound them to poverty, and to have all

things in common. The rich who entered the order were to sell all their possessions and give the money to the poor. The brethren were to receive nothing without the leave of the superior; and if, through persecution or otherwise, they were driven from their home, they were to betake themselves as soon as possible to the same place whither their superior had retired. They were to employ the first part of the morning in labouring with their hands, and to devote the rest to reading. Every Saturday was allowed them to provide themselves with necessaries; and on Sundays only were they allowed a very moderate quantity of wine. Whenever they went abroad they were to go in pairs. They were never to eat but in the convent, nor ever to receive either letters or presents in secret; and they were enjoined to observe chastity. These, and a few other rules on the observance of charity, modesty and some others of the christian virtues, were the rules of the order, which were to be read every week in the presence of the whole house. In order to carry out more effectually the conventual vow of seclusion, each of the friars had a separate cell assigned to him, into which he was to retire for study or devotion, and where he might be free from the distraction of the *locutorium*, or common room of the friary.

The house of the hermit friars at Warrington, although it flourished for nearly three hundred years, and during that time played no unimportant part in the place, has remained hitherto without the history which it deserved. The reasons why it has escaped the notice of the monas-

tic historians have been already alluded to, but Time, and Truth his daughter, have their secrets in store for those who seek them ; and many of these relating to the Warrington hermit friars, which had been long hid, having lately come to light, have been thrown together in the following pages, and are now offered as a contribution towards the history of one of the minor religious houses.

W. B.

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HISTORY OF WARRINGTON FRIARY.

CHAPTER I.

AMONGST the religious institutions which once exercised a great influence in Warrington was "The Friary," which has now passed away, leaving nothing but Friarsgate, the name of a neighbouring street, to mark the site whereon it stood :

Stat nominis umbra.

The Friary at Warrington was a house of Hermit friars, of the order of St. Austin. Dr. Hook, in his *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, says that these friars had their beginning in 1209, while others maintain that they were first brought into England in 32nd Henry III., 1248, by Clare, earl of Gloucester, who founded for them their house at Clare, in the diocese of Norwich. (Dugdale's *Baronage*, vol. i., pp. 211-212; Capgrave's work published by the Master of the Rolls, pp. 226-227; *Journal of R. Arch. Inst.*, 1869, p. 373.) On the other hand, it is said that all the Hermit friars, who were formerly called by a great variety of names, were brought into one company by pope Alexander IV., who styled them *fratres heremitarum sancti Augustini*. (*Antiquities of Oxford* in Hearne's

Textus Roffensis, p. 339.) Alexander wore the tiara from 1243 until 1261, and he probably consolidated the hermits into one body. We have a proof how soon the new order began to spread itself, since in 1252 we find Lanfranc, of Milan, the general of the order, despatching some of their body on a mission to this country, where, however, they had already effected a settlement under De Clare, in the diocese of Norwich. Religious novelties, when once introduced, were of rapid growth in that age. In a few years from their first arrival the Hermit friars had built their great house at Oxford, where their celebrated disputations bequeathed a name to the exercises for the degree of a master, which were long called "Keeping of Augustines." They had also commenced the erection of their house in London, and over the door had inscribed "MCCLIII." as the date. Some remains of this house, though of a later date perhaps, are, or at least until lately were, to be seen in the beautiful Dutch church in the Austin friars in London; and in the course of a short period the order had so prodigiously increased, in different parts of Christendom, that they reckoned up no less than two thousand convents of men and three hundred of women. No exact date can be fixed for the foundation of the house at Warrington, nor do we know with certainty the name or family of the founder, although many circumstances in its subsequent history point to the Butlers, who founded most of our early public institutions, as the founders also of this.

In the list of religious houses compiled by royal authority in 1261, no mention is made of the house of Austin friars at Warrington, but its origin could not have been long after that time, if we may judge from a fragment of one of the columns of their church, now preserved in the Warrington museum; and from the recorded fact that soon after the battle of Evesham, which was fought in 1265, we find Richard the Hermit carrying to Evesham the votive candle of Roger, rural dean of Warrington, one of the devotees who had been healed by calling to mind the martyrdom of Simon de Montfort, who was killed in that battle, and

whom that age styled St. Simon the Righteous, and honoured with a popular canonization. (Rishanger's *Chronicle*, p. 94.) But whenever, or by whomsoever, the friary at Warrington was founded, the selection of the site of the house there shows the wise discernment and prudent foresight of its architects, who were most probably the first tenants of its cloisters; for while the baron's house and the rectory were planted in a low swamp, with an alluvial foundation, and nearly all the remainder of the town was placed upon a cold unwholesome substratum of clay, they had the sagacity to discover, and the wisdom to choose, a gravelly bank, in which to lay their foundations secure from the damp which invades other parts of the town. No liquids found their way into the friars' cellars without the will of their owners.

The friars professing to have no endowments, for an obvious reason always planted their houses in the immediate neighbourhood of towns. Had they followed the example of the great religious houses and planted themselves in solitude, where there was no one to beg from, they might have wanted bread. Hence the distich:

Bernardus valles, colles Benedictus amabat,
Oppida *Franciscus*, magnas Ignatius urbes.

St. Bernard valleys loves, St. Benet lofty peaks,
St. Francis towns, Ignatius cities seeks.

That the De Clares were the first to plant these friars in England, receives confirmation from the great honour paid to them in almost all their houses. In their house at Gresley, in Staffordshire, the arms of De Clare appeared, with those of their allied families of Vere, Beauchamp and Burgh. (Harwood's *Erdeswicke*, p. 223.) In the abbey at Shrewsbury they were found with those of Beauchamp, Mortimer and Warren; and in the friary church windows at Warrington they appeared with those of Burgh, Warren and Mortimer. And Weever, in his *Funeral Monuments* (p. 475), has this curious dialogue, supposed to take place between a secular and a friar, over the grave of Joan of Acre, the wife

of the stout earl of Gloucester, which gives us the reason why these arms occupy so conspicuous a place in the houses of the Austin friars :

A. This Gilbertis fadir was that noble knight,
Sir Richard of Clare, to sey all and sum
Which for freris love that Giles* hight,
And his boke clepid, De regimine principum.
Made first frere Augustines to Inglelonde cum,
Therein to duelle ; and for that dede,
In heven God graunte hym joye to mede.

Q. But leterally who was telle me,
This Ricardis wiff whom thou preisest so ?

A. The Countess of Hereford and Maud hight she,
Which whan deth the knotte had undoo
Of temporal spousaile bitwixt hem twoo
With divirs parcels encresid our fundation,
Liche as our monumentys make declaratioun.

Q. Of the first Gilbert who was the wiffe ?

A. Dame Maud, a ladye ful honourable,
Born of the Ulsters as she with ryff
Hir armes of glas in the est gable,
And for to God thei wolde ben acceptable.
Her lord and she with an holy entent,
Made up our chirche fro the fundament.
Now to dame Johan turne we ageyn
Latter Gilbertis wyff, as to forne seyde is,
Which lyeth here. — *Q.* Was she baryn ?

A. Nay sir.

Elizabeth she hight.

Q. Who was hir husband ? Sir John of Burgh,
Sire of the Ulsters, so conjoined be
Ulstris armes and Gloucestris thurgh and thurgh,
As shewith our wyndowes in housis thre.

* Egidius Romanus, a pupil of Thomas Aquinas, and afterwards bishop of Berry, who, about 1316, was author of this book.

And then the dialogue goes on to show that Philippa, the daughter and heiress of Lionel duke of Clarence by Elizabeth de Burgh, married sir Edmund Mortimer.

In the *Christian Magazine*, a periodical which was issued at Manchester in 1843 and 1844, there appeared a strange story, which was reprinted in the *Manchester Guardian* of February 1st, 1851. The story gave a copy of a foundation charter of a chapel at Birch near Manchester, in the reign of Richard I., by which charter the chapel was made to be subject to the Hermit friars at Warrington; that is, a chapel which probably did not exist for centuries afterwards, was made over to a community that was not born for half a century after king Richard's death. The fact was that the pretended charter was a forgery, as the editor of the respectable paper in which it had been reprinted acknowledged with regret when his attention was drawn to it by a neighbouring antiquary.

The Franciscans, another of the mendicant orders, came into England some twenty or more years before the Hermit friars, for we read that they were sent into England from Fécamp in Normandy, on the 11th September 1224. (*Athenæum*, July 31st 1858, p. 130.) Leland, however, was mistaken when he said that the Franciscan grey friars, or Minorites, had ever a house in Warrington.

We are told that the habit of the order of the Hermit friars of St. Augustine was a black gown, with a cowl of the same colour from the head to the shoulders; under that a little white coat with a white list; and that they wore a girdle of leather fastened with a buckle of ox horn. Mr. Fosbrooke coincides in this account of their dress, and has a plate of a Hermit friar wearing it. (*British Monachism*, pp. 222, 286; and *Antiquities of Oxford*, p. 341.)

This dress was enjoined by Alexander IV. It came not, therefore, as their name did, from Augustine, which an old rhymer questioned their right to assume, when, speaking in the saint's person, he said :

I, Augustine, bear no name of that rude pack
Of begging friars, who clothed are in black.

But in the *Clavis Calendaria* we learn that when Augustine returned to Africa in the year 388, he drew to him eleven other persons of reputed sanctity, and with them occupied a small place in the city of Hippo, where for three years he continued to pursue a life of study and religious observances, and it is to this humble beginning that we are to ascribe the rise and subsequent consideration of Eremites or Augustine friars, from whom sprang other orders. (Brady's *Clavis Calendaria*, ii. p. 138.)

Chatterton's introduction, in his *Bristowe Tragedye*, of the Augustine friars in a dress which they never wore, might have betrayed his forgery sooner, if it had been examined as it ought :

The freers of Saincte Augustyne next appeared to the syght,
Alle clad in homelie russett weedes, of godlye monkish plyghte,
Ynne diffraunte partes a godlye psaume most sweetlye they did
chaunt.

Behynde theyre backes syx minstrelles came who tuned the
strunge bataunt.

Before the end of the thirteenth century, though the exact date has not been ascertained, they had built their house, and were fast furnishing it with inhabitants ; some of whom, as we shall soon see, began now to seek holy orders at the hands of the bishop of Lichfield, then the diocesan of these parts. By degrees, also, they were acquiring means to keep up their house, by promising the religious services of their house in exchange for land and possessions. What was the style of their house, though it has now wholly perished, we may know from the few fragments of it still to be seen in the Warrington museum. *Ex pede disce Herculem* can hardly be said of the building however, for it was not large but small, and plainly built in the early English style, with lancet windows and multangular columns but little ornamented. The windows were filled with arms in stained glass, amongst which the coat of Simon de Mont-

fort, a hero in great favour with the friars, occupied a conspicuous place.

In the year 1292 Ralph Fitz Henry de Werington and Alicia his wife, recovered against William le Botiler, in an action then tried at Lancaster before sir Hugh Cressingham and others his companion justices in Eyre, five acres of land in Warrington, and by a deed, dated 22nd June 1292, they released these lands to the said William le Botiler, their lord, and in their release they describe four of these acres as lying within the close of the brethren of St. Augustine at Warrington, and the fifth as lying between the said close and the Pfrecroft [Pear-tree croft].

Their friary was now built and inhabited, and the Lichfield register tells us that at Burton, on the 11th December 1301, Geoffrey de Bovey, a friar from Warrington, was ordained priest, and Ralph de Staunford, another friar of the same house, was ordained an acolyte; and that in 1301 Jordan de Werington was ordained a deacon at Colwich. In December 1305 brother Jordan de Weryngton was ordained priest at Colwich, "ad tit. pat." Thus he had again to travel a long way for his orders in winter, at a time when the roads were bad and there were no public conveyances, which was perhaps the reason he allowed an interval of four years to elapse before he sought the priesthood. He went not alone, however, for brother William de Weryngton was ordained deacon at the same time, What a severe journey it must have been for these men to undertake at that time and in the winter! In a deed of sir William Buttiler's, baron of Warrington, which was made not later than 1305, the baron expressly mentions the religious house at Warrington, by which is meant the Hermit friars, whom he designated as brethren of the order of St. Augustine; and in the next year, 1306, sir William Deyners of Daresbury remembers them in his will, and leaves them a legacy of half a mark. (*Hist. Chesh.*, vol. i. p. 539.) In the year 1308 their house was still growing in public estimation, and it procured for them from John de Boydell, lord of Grappenhall and Latchford, the right of free passage, without

toll or charge, for their wains through Latchford, in return for certain spiritual services to be rendered to the donor and his family ; but it is best to give the grant, which bears date at Warrington, in a translation in the grantor's own words :

To all the sons of Holy Mother Church, John Boydell, lord of Gropenhale and Latchford, wisheth health. Know ye that for the health of my body and the safety of my soul, the soul of dame Margaret my wife, and the souls of my heirs and of my parents living and dead, and of all the faithful dead, I have given to God and the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Blessed Augustine at Warrington, a free passage through the village of Latchford for their wains by whatsoever name they may be called, so that every priest brother of the convent celebrate mass on the day of my anniversary for my soul, and the souls of my parents and of all the faithful dead. (*Hist. Chesh.*, vol. i. p. 447.)

The donor, who was anxious to secure privileges of this sort wherever he could, made a gift of a similar kind to the abbot and convent of Whalley in return for like services. (*Coucher Book of Whalley*, p. 409.) About this time two ancient Warrington Butler charters occur, the first of which mentions "William the frere mon," who was possibly the successor of Richard the Hermit, and the second prior of Warrington. The second deed mentions Gilbert the Anchorite, who may have been the third prior. (Lord Lilford's MSS.) On the 10th August 7 Edward III., 1333, the king addressed a singular request to the provincial of the Hermit friars. (*Rot. Scot.*, i. 258.)

The Hermit friars of Warrington were at this period in the vigour of their youth. They were active and zealous, and their services in and out of their church were needed to supply the spiritual wants of this large parish, which had then only one church. The friars exerted a great influence, both upon the place and the time. Let us imagine ourselves passing along one of the narrow and picturesque streets of the old town, and coming at some sudden turn upon one of the cowed brethren, or perhaps the prior himself, hurrying in sombre robes on some

errand of charity or business, and giving, as we meet, the passing *Benedicite*.

A statute *de viris religiosis* was passed in the 7th of Edward I., intended to check the alienation of land to the religious houses. It was the aim of those houses to acquire donations of land for their support, which robbed the king and nobles of the services they were wont to receive from their tenants, land in religious hands being said to be in *mortmain*. But this statute, which was meant as a check to the great monasteries, was really a help to the lesser ones, such as our Warrington friars, whose chief dependance was not upon their acquired lands and possessions, but upon alms to be acquired by begging. (Southey's *Commonplace Book*, 3rd series, p. 107.)

While the order of the Augustinian friars was still young, it received a great stimulus throughout Europe from the high character and eminent piety of one of its members. Nicholas, a young man born at St. Angelo, in Italy, having heard one of the friars preach, was so moved by his sermon, that at the age of eighteen he professed himself a friar in their house at Tolentino, where in due time he was ordained a priest. He lived a life of great austerity, and obtained a wide-spread renown by his religious exercises, the effect of which reflected credit upon the Hermit friars in general; and afterwards, when he died, on the 10th September 1308, he was thought worthy of canonization, and became St. Nicholas of Tolentino. And thus the order received its first saint, and rose still higher in public favour.

The Warrington friars lost no opportunity of strengthening their stakes and enlarging their borders. Their next charter was granted them by a donor who had as many patronymics as a Welshman. It was granted to them on the 8th April 1335, by Henry fitz Robert fitz Radulf fitz Henry de Werington, who by it, for the safety of his soul, and the souls of his ancestors, and the souls of those his relations who should come after him (*parentum suorum predecessorum et aliorum parentum successorum*), released to the prior and brethren of the Hermits of St. Augustine

at Warrington, all his right to his land and tenements at Warrington lying between Aldreswell on the one side and the Millsteads on the other, and which lands at one end abutted upon Blanchemedes and at the other upon Arpefordehethes. (From a copy of the original.) The names of places have since been altered, or we might have identified the exact whereabouts of this gift.

On the 13th March 1360, friar Robert de Werington was ordained priest at Heywood. In the year 1364 mention of the friary at Warrington again occurs in the Lichfield register. On the 8th kalends of July (24th June) 1363, at Upholland, friar John de Knowsale, of Werington, had a grant for two years of the office of penitentiary throughout the diocese. On the 28th December 1366, when he was called prior of Werington, he had a renewal of the same grant for two years, limited however to the deanery of Werington; and on the 12th August 1368 the same grant was again renewed, and this time it was made to include the deanery of Manchester as well as Werington. This office of penitentiary or penancer gave him who bore it the power to hear confessions and, for a fine, which it was his duty to impose and moderate, to remit the punishment (Fosbroke, *Brit. Mon.*, p. 169), which was a greater help to the friars' exchequer, and far better for them, than simple alms. Chaucer, who has introduced such a person under the name of a pardonere, says :

Upon a day he gat him more moneie
Than that the persone gat in monethes tweie,

(Prol. to the *Canterbury Tales*.) In February 1369, the friars found a new place in which to collect alms, for friar John, the Hermit, was then licensed, at Heywood, to celebrate divine service for two years in the chapel built at the foot of Warrington bridge. Our ancestors wisely thought, with old George Herbert, that "prayers and provender hinder no journeys."

On the 21st September 1369, friar Geoffrey Banastre, of Werington, received a grant, at Heywood, of the office of penitentiary

throughout the archdeaconry of Chester ; and on the same day William de Eltonhede received a similar grant for the deaneries of Macclesfield, Middlewich and Frodsham. The Warrington friars had found the penancer's office profitable ! On the 23rd June 1371, the same friar, Geoffrey Banastre, who was now called "*Sacræ Pagine* professor" (professor of Holy Scripture), had his office of penitentiary renewed at Heywood ; and on the 20th February following (probably because the work of pardoning had become onerous) friar William de Hardschagh, at the instance of the same Geoffrey Banastre, now become master in theology, had granted to him a faculty to absolve eighteen persons of the county of Lancaster from such sins as they should be willing to confess to him before the octaves of the following Easter. The number to whom the pardoner's power was limited (the same as the number of those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell), seems to suggest that these persons had all been concerned in the same crime, and were known and named in the licence.

The following ordinations of Warrington friars are extracted from the Lichfield register :

Friar Ralph de Marston ordained sub-deacon on the 19th February 1365.

Friar Richard de Aulton ordained deacon, at Colwich, on the 21st March 1365.

Friars Henry Newton and Richard de la Mare were ordained sub-deacons at Colwich on the 22nd March 1370.

Stephen Drap deacon, and John de Wuchin and John de Geldred priests, at the same time.

John de Holand ordained sub-deacon, and Richard de la Mare and Stephen Drap priests, at Colwich, on the 20th September 1371.

Friar John de Holand ordained deacon, at Colwich, and friar Henry Newton priest, on the 20th December 1371.

Friars Richard Eston and William de Wynterton ordained deacons, and John de Holand priest, at Colwich, on the 18th September 1372.

Friar Will de Wynterton was ordained priest, at Colwich, on the 18th May 1373.

Friar John Palmer was ordained priest, at Colwich, on the 19th September 1377.

Friar John Brown was ordained deacon, at Sallowe, on the 14th July 1378.

Friar John Thebaut ordained deacon, at Coventry, on the 24th March 1379.

Sunday the 13th November 1379 was a great day in the house of the Hermit friars at Warrington. Sir Thomas de Dutton had been indicted for entering the lodgings of Lionel, son of king Edward III., during the king's absence, and there slaying Michael Poynings; and his life had been stained with other crimes. (Collins' *Peerage*, vol. viii. p. 45.) His end now drawing near, he had need of prayers, and he desired to secure those of the friars of Warrington; and on the above day there was assembled in the chapter-house of the friars at Warrington a dignified company, amongst whom were Thomas, abbot of St. Werburgh's in Chester; Stephen, abbot of Vale Royal; Richard, prior of Norton; Roger, prior of Birkenhead; William de Eltonhed, prior of Warrington; and Henry de Towesdale, provincial prior of the order of Hermit friars, to witness the contract which was made between sir Thomas and the Hermit friars. And this was the agreement into which they entered: The prior of Warrington and his convent granted to sir Thomas Dutton knight, a perpetual chantry; to wit, that a sufficient friar of their convent should be especially elected to pray for the salvation of sir Thomas, his children, and of Philippa his wife, and her parents, when they should die, at the great altar of their church, yearly for ever; and that their names should be written down in their martyrology; whereunto the prior and convent bound themselves, under a penalty of 3s. 4d., to be levied by the provincial prior upon omission of such form of service; and if for a week or a fortnight it were omitted, then must they double the fine omitted in manner aforesaid; if neglected for six months, then

upon pain of suspension ; if for a year, then upon excommunication until the time omitted should be made up. And this agreement was confirmed by Henry de Towesdale, provincial prior of the order in England, with a special injunction that the said persons be yearly twice commemorated before the whole convent—once at the first entrance of the prior of Warrington into the convocation house yearly ; the other time on the election day of a fellow prior for a provincial convocation. Dated at Warrington.

Men are the same in all ages : Epicurus left his garden to his school, upon condition that philosophy should continue to be taught in it, and that he should there be yearly commemorated for ever. (*Diog. Laer.*, x. p. 18.)

This deed is a further proof that the friary was still growing in estimation ; or sir Thomas Dutton, who had great need of such vicarious services as were then so much esteemed, would hardly have resorted to it, and with so many stipulations secured the advantage of the services of the Hermit friars of Warrington.

CHAPTER II.

BLANCHEMEDE, as we have seen, is mentioned in one of the early charters as one of the abuttals of the friary close, and upon this close the friars cast a longing eye, and probably thought, if they did not say,

O si angulus ille

Proximus accedat qui nunc denormat agellum,

and for a consideration the owner was willing to give it ; and by his deed, dated at Warrington, on the 18th June 1332, William le Botiller, lord of Warrington, "gave to God and the blessed Virgin, and the friars of St. Augustine, at Warrington, serving God there," all that his meadow in Warrington, called Blanchemedede, free of all secular service, and to be held only in *frank almoign*, an old tenure by which the receivers were to say masses and do divine service for such persons as the donor thought fit to designate ; who, in this case, were expressed to be himself, his wife Elizabeth and their ancestors.

The law was not very well settled in that age. Magna Charta required to be renewed many times before it was well established, and almost every private deed was confirmed by the donor or his relations several times, and sometimes at long intervals, before the title was complete. Thus on the 6th January 1371 the successor of the donor of Blanchemedede released to the Hermit friars, who could not afford to lose so valuable a possession, whatever title he might be supposed to have in that land.

About this time another friend of the Hermit friars appeared in the person of Roger de Sonky, who, probably from a like

consideration for their religious services, granted them an acre and a half of land, lying near the friary.

Now, however, they began to be haunted by the fear of forfeiture under the Mortmain act, for not having first obtained the royal licence to make these acquisitions ; but this defect they managed to cure, by obtaining the king's charter, dated 26th May 1372, which, after reciting William le Butler's gift of Blanchemedes, and Roger de Sonky's acre and a half, went on to say that the king, for the advancement of the house, as he expressed it, was pleased to confirm both those gifts, and to remit the forfeiture which had been incurred.

The great body of the friars did not take holy orders, but they had always a certain number in the house who were either priests, or deacons, or in minor orders. The following is a list taken from the Lichfield register of the Warrington friars who obtained orders about this time. The first name which occurs is a French one, and its owner was probably a Frenchman of some foreign house of religion :

Friar John Thebaut ordained priest, at Colwich, on the 22nd September 1380.

Friar Gregory Banastre ordained sub-deacon, at Colwich, on the 30th March 1381.

Friar Nicholas Spynk ordained a sub-deacon, at Colwich, on the 21st September 1381.

Gregory Banastre ordained deacon the same day.

Nicholas Spynk deacon, and

Gregory Banastre priest, on the 21st December 1381.

Friar Walter Bardeney ordained deacon, and

Friar Nicholas Spynk ordained priest, at Colwich, on the 31st May 1382.

Friar Henry Trewlove ordained deacon, at Colwich, on the 20th September 1382.

Friar Rob. de Sefton ordained a sub-deacon, at Colwich, on the 19th September 1383.

About this time the friars seem to have been favoured by

parliament, both directly and indirectly. The act of 7 Edward I., which was meant to curb the greater monasteries, rather helped than hindered the friars, who did not profess to acquire land; and now, in 1380, when parliament ordered a new and strange subsidy to be raised, under which every priest, regular or secular, and every nun, was to pay 6s. 8d., and every man and woman of the age of sixteen, whether married or unmarried (except known beggars), was to pay 4d. (Holinshed's *Chronicles*, p. 380), all the clergy and all the religious were caught by it, except the friars, who, under their recognized character of mendicants, wholly escaped it. (Smollet's *Hist. Eng.*, iv. p. 38; and Henry's *Hist. Eng.*, viii. pp. 169, 170.) The subsidy might well be called strange, for no act to collect it exists on the statute book, and it was the attempt to levy it which gave rise to the insurrection of Wat Tyler, with whom and his party the friars were in such favour, that when it was determined that all the other clergy were to be slaughtered, the friars only were to be spared. (Hume's *Hist. Eng.*, iii. p. 2.) Their lives were thus safe; and while the exemption from the tax saved their exchequer, the sale of such chauntries as that granted to sir Thomas Dutton was a means of enriching its coffers. The Carmelite friars at Chester, for a similar grant to one of our neighbours, sir Gilbert de Haydoc, in 1348, had received forty marks, which was a considerable sum at that time; and sir Thomas Dutton, a quarter of a century later, for a like grant, would hardly pay a less sum. (From the original grant in the possession of W. J. Legh esq., M.P.)

But the friars had another fruitful source of income in the letters of fraternity, which they were in the habit of granting for money to those who desired them, and who in that age were so numerous that the letters were kept ready written, with a blank left for the name to be put in when a purchaser was found. One of these, which had probably been taken out for sale and lost before a customer was obtained, for there was still a blank for the name, begins by professing to have heard of the purchaser's devotion to the friars, and then grants him in life and death a full partici-

pation in the benefit of all the masses, prayers, abstinences, night-watchings, labours and good works of the order, and ordains that after his decease all the brethren, in full chapter, shall commend his soul to God in their prayers, and if his death should happen to be made known to them, the like masses and prayers should be offered for him as for any other of the brethren. (*From the original in the possession of J. Ireland Blackburne esq.*)

At the founding of sir Thomas Dutton's chantry, the friary saw a goodly number of abbots and priors met to witness it, but it was shortly to see a still greater gathering of knights, gentlemen, and other laymen collected within its walls, to attend a court of the lord-marshal of England. The church of the friars was now complete, and in an enviable state of splendour. On its steeple, with its bell turret, were carved the arms of the Butlers, its founders. Forty or more shields, emblazoned with colours and gilding, glowed over head and covered the chancel ceiling; amongst which were those of the founders and patrons, and those of Beauchamp (probably of that sir John Beauchamp who was honoured with a burial in the house of the Hermit friars of Clare), Butler, Dutton, Holland, Lathom, Fytton and others; and in harmony with these were

“Storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.”

These windows were filled with the emblazoned arms of Simon de Montfort, Clare, De Burgh, Warren, Mortimer, Banastre, Butler, and Atherton. In them also were those three full-length figures of Thomas earl of Lancaster, sir Thomas Banastre and sir Robert de Holland, all with their proper arms, which may be seen engraved in the *History of Lancashire*, where, by mistake, they are stated to have been in the windows of the parish church. (Baines's *Lanc.*, first edition, vol. iii. 660.)

Thomas earl of Lancaster, having risen against the king, was beheaded at Pontefract on the 22nd March 1322. Like Simon de Montfort, after his death he was accounted a saint; and Ro-

bert de Werington, a monk of Whalley, but no doubt a native of this place, had a brief to collect money to build a chapel over his remains. Sir Robert de Holland, who at first was a great friend and supporter of Thomas earl of Lancaster, is supposed to have deserted his cause at the last. Sir Thomas Banastre was member of parliament for Lancashire in 1314.

The earl and his two companions who were commemorated in the window had no doubt been benefactors to the friary; but the circumstance that sir Robert de Holland lost public favour after the earl's death, shows that the window must have been put in before that date, and before the earl rose in arms against his sovereign.

We are sometimes apt to think these memorial windows are of modern introduction, but this is a mistake. De Caumont thinks that painted glass became common in England in the thirteenth century, and Dallaway says it was connected with architecture in the reign of Henry III., and reached its zenith in the fifteenth century. (De Caumont's *French Archæology*, and Dallaway's *Discourse on Architecture*.) But its use then and now was prompted by different motives. Then it was a pious work which would bring down blessings on its author. In *Pierce Plowman's Vision* one of the friars asks such a gift from a penitent and reminds her of the reward:

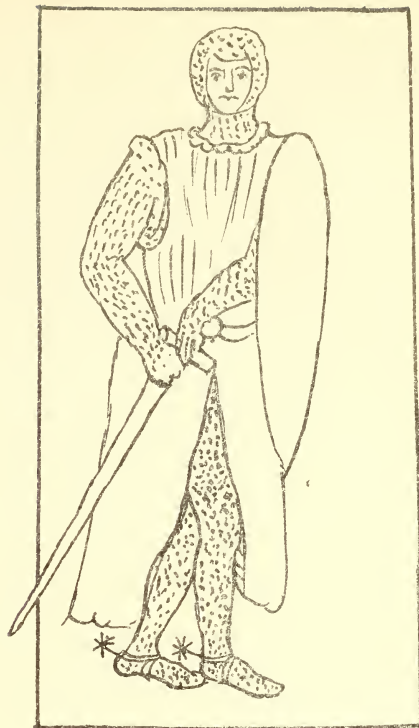
“Then he assoyled her soon, and sithen he said,
We have a window in werking will set us full high,
Wouldest thou, the glase, the gable and grave therein thy name.
Seker (secure) should thy soul be heaven to have.”

(*Pierce Plowman*, fol. 12.)

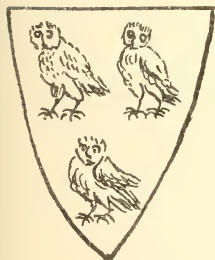
On the floor of the church there lay a cross-legged figure of wood, dressed in chain-mail, wearing the sword, shield and spurs of knighthood, and over all the camise, the robe whose name is the original of the word *chemise*, which has now grown to be the French name for a man's body linen, and the English name for a woman's. A rude drawing of this figure may be seen in the



Sir William le Boteler
and Alieia his mother



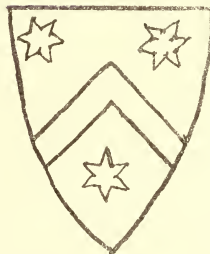
Sir William filz Almeric
le Boteler.



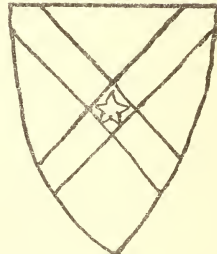
Atherton.



Atherton.



Bruche.



Standish.

FROM THE FRIARY.

entrance hall of the Warrington museum. These wooden monumental effigies in ancient times were not uncommon. In Gloucester cathedral there is a beautiful one of this kind to Robert Curthose, son of William the Conqueror, who died in 1137, which is painted in colours, and represents the deceased in chain-mail, but which Mr. Westmacott thinks could not have been erected until some years after the decease of Robert Curthose. (*Archl. Journal*, No. 68, p. 306.)

William de Valence, earl of Pembroke, who was buried in Westminster abbey in 1296, is commemorated by a similar effigy in oak. (Bloxham's *Mon. Architecture*, 142.)

William fitz Almeric Butler, who was probably the founder, and to whom we are inclined to ascribe the monumental effigy in wood on the friary floor, was sheriff of Lancashire in 1256. And we are disposed to believe that the fragmentary inscription *Lanccloti comitatis*, the jumble of some ignorant transcriber, was meant for *Lancastriæ comitatus* (*vicecomes*), or sheriff of Lancashire, and was intended to apply to William fitz Almeric. (*Harleian MSS.*, 139 fol. 22, and 2129 fol. 188.) It used to be thought that the crossed legs denoted the crusaders, who

“The vow performed, return to lie
In cross-legged effigy,
Devoutly stretched upon the chancel floor.”

William fitz Almeric Butler, who lived under a prince who led one of those adventures to the fiery East, might well have sustained the character of a crusader, but neither in the close nor patent rolls (both of which have been searched) does his name appear among the companions of prince Edward, although no mention of him at home occurs for several years after the death of Henry III.

It has been suggested lately that the crossing of the legs in such an effigy denotes that the deceased had either vowed to go on the crusade, had been high sheriff of his county, or had served in some other office of dignity. (*Notes and Queries*, Oct. 14, 1865, p. 312.)

It is singular that in the church of St. Bride's, in Glamorganshire, there occurs on an incised slab a cross-legged effigy of another Boteler, not very different in design from William fitz Almeric's. Like his, this effigy wears chain mail, and is covered with the camise, and round it is this inscription :

“Johan le Boteler git ici
Deu de sa alme eit merci. Amen.”

(Cutt's *Monumental Brasses*, pl. xxxii. 2.)

Edward III. being at Liverpool, on the 23rd October 1323, addressed a letter to this John Boteler, requiring him to aid in preventing the miracles said to be wrought at the graves of Henry de Montfort and Henry de Wylington, who had been lately executed for rebellion. (*Fœdera* ii. 536, 7.)

When the warriors of the cross followed Richard I. to the Holy Land it became necessary, as every one then was clad from head to foot in complete steel, that each should bear upon his shield some device by which he might be known from his fellows, and hence the custom of wearing coat-armour became general, which gave rise to that great variety of devices to be found on ancient shields. Across the middle of one shield there was a fesse or band of a different colour or metal from the shield itself; the upper part of another had a chief, another bore a chevron, a fourth a cross, and a fifth a saltire, all of which, besides being personal distinctions of the wearer, answered at the same time the purpose of strengthening the shield, and were not merely, as some have supposed, painted devices to ornament it. These devices on shields were very numerous, but the above may serve by way of example.

The assumption of a shield which belonged to another was a serious wrong, which, in mediæval times, gave rise to many quarrels, some of which did not end so harmlessly as that we are about to relate. Amongst the Genoese whom the French king hired to make war against the English, there was a knight who bore an ox-head painted on his shield. This device a nobleman

of France challenged, and so long did they strive that they must needs fight for it; so, at a day and place appointed, the French gallant came into the field richly armed at all points. The Genoese, all unarmed, came also to the field, and said to the Frenchman: "Wherefore should we this day fight?" "Marry," said the Frenchman, "I will make good with my body that these arms were mine ancestors' before thine." "What were your ancestors' arms?" quoth the Genoese. "An ox-head," said the Frenchman. "Then," said the Genoese, "there needeth no battle between us, for this I bear is but a cow's head." (Lower's *Surnames*, p. 60.) In this case an unskilful artist had nearly led to a mortal battle, but another shield—a shield *azure*, with a bend *or*, in which the artist was not to blame—led to a dispute which lasted very long, and but for the earl-marshal's court might have ended fatally. One part of the proceedings of this court, which were conducted with great solemnity, the friary at Warrington was destined to witness.

In the year 1385, when king Richard II. advanced into Scotland at the head of an army, sir Robert Grosvenor of Cheshire appeared in the host, wearing the above shield, and his right to it was immediately challenged by sir Richard Scrope, who claimed it as belonging to him by long descent from his ancestors. Sir Richard Scrope, the challenger, though he had been chancellor of the kingdom, had not been trained in a law-school but in a school of arms, in which school his life had been principally exercised. In 1346, when he was still a youth, he fought at Crecy, and either by sea or land he had been engaged in battles, public or private, almost ever since. He valued very highly the shield *azure* with the bend *or* as an heraldic inheritance, which he said his family had borne since the conquest. The Carminows of Cornwall, however, despised his claim as being but modern in comparison of theirs, for they averred that they had borne the very same arms since the days of the British king Arthur, and sir Richard Scrope was obliged to allow their claim. He was in no humour, however, to allow a similar claim to sir Robert Grosvenor,

and upon his challenging it, the king caused public proclamation to be made throughout the host, that all who were interested in the dispute should appear at Newcastle-upon-Tyne on the 20th August in the same year. The cause was thought to be too important to be settled at once, or without hearing evidence of usage on both sides in the court of the lord-marshal. Before it was decided there had been examined upon it in open court at various times and in different places—for the court was migratory—one sovereign prince, one duke, three earls, three barons, three abbots, two priors, eleven bannerets, and nearly one hundred and fifty knights, gentlemen and others; amongst whom was nature's true nobleman the poet, Geoffrey Chaucer. In the progress of the cause the court appointed sir William Bromborough, parson of Aldford, sir John Botiler baron of Warrington, sir William Gerard knight, and sir Nicholas Vernoun knight, commissioners in the cause; and these four commissioners appointed the 12th September 1386 to meet and hear evidence in the cause in the friary at Warrington. Let us imagine ourselves entering by the gateway of the friary, passing through the church with its painted windows glowing in the sunlight of that autumn morning, and finding ourselves in the chapter-house, which has been fitted up as a court for the occasion. The four judges occupy a tribunal over which the royal arms and their own are painted. William de Eltonhede, who is still the prior, occupies a raised seat at the side, and four scribes are seated at a table in front of the judges on which lies a painting of the disputed shield. Sir Richard Scrope appears only by his proctor, but sir Robert Grosvenor is present in person, and there is a crowd of spectators. Among the witnesses then examined were John de Massey, sir Lawrence Dutton, Nicholas de Rixton, Roger prior of Birkenhead, William de Rixton, and Thomas le Vernon. John de Massey, one of these, swore that he had seen the challenged arms upon the cross at Bradley, in Appleton, Cheshire, and that they were painted there by the Grosvenors more than half a century before. After sitting three days at Warrington the court adjourned to Lancaster,

but not until it had gone on for three years more was the cause finally decided.

Sir William Bromborough, one of the judges who sat at Warrington, who was once rector of St. Olave's in Chester, but who at the time when the court sat at Warrington was rector of Aldford, deserves a passing notice, as one of those who adhered to king Richard II. after his fall. When the king was deposed he resigned his living, and obtained leave to go on pilgrimage to foreign parts, which so resembles the conduct of the good parson in Dryden's paraphrase of Chaucer, that we might almost fancy the portrait to have been meant for him.

“The tempter saw him, too, with envious eye,
And as on Job demanded leave to try,
He took the time when Richard was deposed,
And high and low with happy Harry closed.
He joined not in their choice because he knew
Worse might and often did from change ensue,
Much to himself he thought, but little spoke,
And undeprived his benefice forsook.”

In the year 1332, more than half a century before the great Scrope-and-Grosvenor gathering in the friary, a fine was levied at Westminster of the Butler lands at Warrington, which mentions Richard *Augustinesmogh* as one of the tenants. This Richard, it seems probable, was Richard Utrington, then the prior of the friary, who has written his name in an ancient manuscript copy of the statutes at large from Magna Charta to 14 Edward I. (1286.) By a strange accident this copy has found its way to Bingham's Melcombe in Dorsetshire, where it now is in the library and is the property of a gentleman who has kindly furnished this inscription from it: “Ricus Utring, brother of the order of the Eremite Friars of St. Augustin, in the convent of Weryngton, near Westchester.” (*Notes and Queries*, May 6th 1865, p. 353.) This book (the convent library had but few books) contained the before-mentioned statute *De viris religiosis*, and the prior by reading it was probably induced to urge his

patron to obtain the king's license for his convent to take lands in mortmain. The friars generally were in favour with the great at an early period. In 1299, when king Edward I. was advancing towards Scotland, he gave the Austin friars of Penrith iis. viii*d.*, but when he returned after success had crowned his arms he more than doubled his gift, and presented the friars with vs. viii*d.* The thank-offering does not seem large, but the friars professed poverty, and the king saved his purse and at the same time humoured their profession.

On the 19th September 1388, Thomas de Malton, a Warrington friar, was ordained a sub-deacon at Coventry, and on the 18th September in the following year he was ordained a deacon.

On the 26th February 1389, John Leyland another friar from Warrington was ordained a deacon at Lichfield, and on the 28th May following he was ordained a priest.

Sir Lawrence Dutton, one of the witnesses who were examined at Warrington in the Scrope-and-Grosvenor controversy, and who was then forty-five years of age, in the year 1392, feeling, although he was not old, that his end was near, made his will on the 26th January in that year, and died very shortly afterwards. He seems to have been satisfied that the friars of Warrington had fulfilled their chantry contract with his father, for he left each of the four orders of religious brethren at Chester and Warrington *xxd.* (*Hist. Chesh.*, i. 479.) Legacies of this kind were no doubt expected to be repaid in masses, but, in thus remembering the Warrington friars, sir Lawrence was influenced by his family connexion with the Butlers, as well as by a recollection of the bargain his father had made with the friars. A copy of the seal to sir Lawrence's will is in the Warrington museum. Sir Lawrence seems to have stood somewhat in the relation of patron to the prioress and nunnery of Our Lady at Chester, for the inquisition post-mortem shows that he held for them lands in Lache-by-Marleston and Claverton, with houses in Chester as well as the manor of Ness, and two parts of the manor of Kingsley for himself. (*Inquisitions* p. m., 15 Richard II., p. 149.)

Friar John Tydeswell was ordained a sub-deacon at Colwich on the 23rd September 1391, a deacon on the 9th March, and a priest on the 31st March following. Friar John Pulford was ordained a sub-deacon at Chester on the 21st September 1392, a deacon at Haywood three months afterwards, and in another three months a priest at Kenilworth. Nearly his whole time in that year must have been taken up in travelling to and fro' for his holy orders.

On the 4th October 1394, William Mainwaring of Peover, being about to go to the wars in Guienne, made his will, in which amongst other legacies are the following :—

“Itm lego Knowsley pror de Weryngton, I. mar. et conventui ejusdem I. mar.” (*Mainwaring Papers.*)

A mark to the prior and a mark to his convent must not be considered as great gifts ; but the gift gives us the name of another prior of Warrington, John de Knowsley.

On the 21st February 1395, friar John Banastre, of the convent at Warrington, had a license to hear confessions throughout the archdeaconry of Chester.

In 1397, after the earl of Arundel had been beheaded, and his body buried in the church of the Austin friars in London, it was reported, and in that age readily believed, that his head had been miraculously re-joined to his body ; upon which pilgrimages were made to his tomb until the king, whose mind it disturbed, caused the body to be disinterred and exposed to public view. But the votaries would not believe the evidence of their senses, and at length the friars were ordered to take down the earl's escutcheon and to conceal his grave with a new pavement. (*Smollett's Hist. Eng.*, iv. 196.) Simon de Montfort, Thomas of Lancaster, and the earl of Arundel, who died violent deaths for political causes in the times in which they lived, were all exalted to the rank of saints. It had been better if they had so lived as to deserve such a title before as well as after death.

Friar William Staynfield of Warrington was ordained a deacon at Lichfield on the 23rd March 1397.

Friars John de Knowsley and William Hardshaw had license

to hear confessions on the 15th September 1398; and friar William Staynfield was ordained a priest, and friar Thomas de Lythorpol a sub-deacon at Lichfield, on the 26th September 1398.

The vigour and piety which the friars had shown at the beginning of their career had begun to flag under the influence of success. Worldliness sprang from their wealth and popularity, and they became the object of Wycliffe's vehement invectives. "Men note many harms that friars do in the church. They spoil the people many ways. They steal poor men's children," are his words.

Piers Plowman also attacked them in verse for their neglect of the poor, while for the sake of gain they were constant in following the rich :

"Freers followed folke that were riche,
And folke that were pore at litle price they set,
And no cors in 'hir kyrkeyard nor kirke was buried,
But quick he bequeth hem ought or quit part of his debts."
(Bloxham's *Monum. Arch.* 10, in notis.)

About the year 1400 there had grown up a practice of taking young boys and allowing them to become professed in the friaries without the consent of their parents or guardians, and it was to this that Wycliffe alluded when he spoke of the friars stealing children. The evil had become so general that in 4 Henry IV. (1402) the commons prayed parliament to ordain that no one enter any house of any of the four orders of friars, Austins, Preachers, Carmelites, or Minors, under the age of twenty-one, and that none of such friars should receive any such into their order, habit, or profession under pain of incurring the statute of provisors. To which the king made answer that no friar of any of the said orders should receive into his order any infant under the age of fourteen, without the consent of his father, mother, or next friend, and no friar should entice, inveigle, or persuade any such infant to leave the order into which he had been received for one year; and if any infant should be so received or enticed away, and a

request should be made to the provincial, warden, or prior of the order, and should not be attended to, the chancellor should have power to take away such infant and punish such provincial, warden, or prior. And this ordinance was signed by John Zouche, master of the friars Minors; William Pikworth, provincial of the friars Preachers; William de Welle, provincial of the order of the friars Augustines; Stephen Parryngton, provincial of the order of friars Carmelites. (*Rolls of Parliament*, vol. iv. 502.) And the principals of the four orders were afterwards ordered to be sworn not to receive infants into their houses without the consent of their parents.

Richard Sonke, a Warrington friar, was ordained a deacon on the 22nd September 1402, and a priest on the 20th December following.

On the 22nd February 1404, Geoffrey Banastre, then prior of Warrington, had a license to hear confessions which was dated at Eccleshale. This Geoffrey Banastre, on the 3rd June 1419, when he was styled *in utroque jure bacalaureus*, was presented by the abbot of Whalley to the vicarage of Blackburn, where in the year 1453 he founded a chantry of the yearly value of 4*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, and died about October 1457. (*Lanc. Chantries*, 152, 3.)

On the 13th June 1405, Richard Bredon, a Warrington friar, was ordained a sub-deacon at Eccleshale; and on the 19th September 1406 John Merbury was ordained a sub-deacon at Colwich, and a deacon at the same place on the 26th February following.

CHAPTER III.

AT the beginning of the year 1410, the friars of Warrington were engaged in finishing a new hall in their convent, and they had sufficient interest at court to obtain the king's warrant to his keeper of Northwode park, in Cheshire, part of the possessions of the duchy of Lancaster, to deliver to John Goldycar, of the Austin friars of the convent at Warrington, four oaks to make boards and shingles for the completing of their new hall then building. (*Duchy Register*.) John Goldycar was then probably the prior of Warrington.

The time at which we are now arrived, the end of the reign of Henry IV., was a critical one for the religious houses. In that reign the church had been powerful enough to procure a penal statute against the Lollards, the followers of Wycliffe and the precursors of the reformation; and Sawtree, a London clergyman, had suffered death at the stake for his religious opinions. But no sooner was Henry IV. in his grave, than his son the fifth Harry, desirous of engaging his subjects' attention, a policy which his father had recommended, meditated a war with France. War cannot be carried on without money, and the cry was that the temporalities of religious houses should be confiscated and employed upon it, being valued thus :

“As much as would maintain to the king's honour,
Full fifteen earls and fifteen hundred knights,
Six thousand and two hundred good esquires.”

This threat was alarming, but the danger was averted by the commons granting to the king instead two tenths and two

fifteenths, besides the lands of all the alien priories in England, and by the clergy granting the king a large sum of money in addition as a free gift. These alien priories were religious houses to the number of 110 in the whole, which were dependent on certain abbeys in Normandy, to which they had belonged when that province remained united to England. (Hume's *Hist. Eng.*, iii. 91 ; Henry's *Hist. Eng.*, ix. 42.) It was hardly to be expected that they should be loyal to the king of England in a war against France, and the English priories and friaries consented to their being sacrificed, when the king, by founding a friary of Augustines and another of Carthusians near his palace at Sheen, showed at the same time that he had no unfriendly feeling towards friaries that were his own. (*France and England under the House of Lancaster*, 93.) It was to these, which he calls chantries, that our great dramatist makes the king allude in his prayer on the night before the battle of Agincourt :

“ ———— Think not upon the fault
My father made in compassing the crown !
I Richard's body have interred anew ;
And on it have bestowed more contrite tears
Than from it issued forced drops of blood.
Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,
Who twice a day their withered hands hold up
Toward heaven, to pardon blood : and I have built
Two chantries where the sad and solemn priests
Sing still for Richard's soul !”

(*Hen. V.*, a. iv., s. ii.)

There were some of the king's subjects, however, who looked with no favourable eyes on the Austin friars, and there seems to have been some threat of forcibly pulling down and destroying the walls of their great friary in London ; and to prevent the execution of it the king's council had speech with the lord mayor upon it on the 27th May 1415, and thereupon issued orders that no destruction or demolition of the friary walls should take place, nor should anything be done therein but by the advice of Whit-

tington (the celebrated Richard, three times mayor of London), Walderne, Chichele, and Crowmer, all of whom had passed the civic chair. (*Privy Council Proceedings*, ii. 168.) In the same year Hugh Tiryngton, an Augustine friar of Lincoln, being charged with wandering about from place to place without the consent of his superior, a warrant was issued to apprehend him and deliver him to friar William Birchall, of the town of Caen. (*Rotuli Normanniæ*, i. p. xxix.) The king was, however, very properly determined to hold the friars to their strict rule, and to allow no irregularity in the government of their houses ; and, that their body might be kept in strict order and rule, he issued his royal license to Peter de Verra, of Tolosa, prior-general of the Austin friars, to visit, with twelve persons in his train, all the priories in England, and to enforce therein the due observance of discipline. (*Fædera* ix. 185.) It is to be hoped the Warrington friary received the visitor and benefited by his report, which, if faithfully made, would be a curious document.

Sir William Butler, the lord of the manor of Warrington, was one of those knights who sailed in the expedition to France with the king. He carried with him a retinue of nine men-at-arms, or (counting himself) ten, and thirty archers ; and had he not, like Courtney bishop of Norwich, and many others, been cut off by dysentery before the walls of Harfleur, he might have shared in the great glories of Agincourt. He was not even spared to see the surrender of Harfleur and the king's barefoot procession to the church to return thanks for it. His body was brought over and buried in the friary under an alabaster slab, with his effigy in armour and that of his wife recumbent on it, and an inscription which stated that he died at Harfleur on the eve of St. Matthew the apostle, 1415. About the month of September in the year 1413, the slumbering persecution of the Lollards revived, and the bishop of London, wishing to bring sir John Oldcastle, lord Cobham, to acknowledge his error, sent sir William Butler's brother, John Butler, to persuade him to receive the citation ; but his lordship peremptorily refused

to listen to John Butler or to admit the summoner to his house. He was afterwards taken by sir John Charlton at Bromartts in Montgomeryshire, where he had taken refuge with his Lollard friends. His captor calls him sir John Cobham "myscreant and unbuxome to the lawes of God." (*Claus. Roll*, 8 Hen. V., m. 24., dors.) In December 1417, sir John suffered martyrdom in St. Giles's in the Fields. (*Fasciculus Zizaniorum*, 435.) On the 18th September 1417, friar Richard Dalton of Warrington was ordained deacon, and on the 18th December following he received priest's orders; and the next year John Cressewell a Warrington friar, was ordained a sub-deacon at Lichfield on the 26th March, a deacon on the 24th September, and a priest on the 17th December of the same year.

The John Butler who has been already mentioned, and of whom, as he was a testamentary benefactor of the friary, we shall hear more, was in the service of Henry V. at this time. On the first year of the king's reign he was sent with Hugh Standish, Robert Rodyngton, and William Troutbeck to convey Carnyan, an esquire of the duke of Burgundy, to Sandwich, and the receiver of Dover castle had orders to pay them 20*l.* for their journey. (*Cheshire Chamberlain's Acct.*) We are told that shortly after this time the king made a treaty with the duke of Burgundy, and the visit of Carnyan, who was probably his envoy, seems a natural preliminary to it. (*Hume's Hist. Eng.*) This John Butler, describing himself as of Eccleshale, at Michaelmas, 1 Henry V. (1413), joined sir William Clinton in giving a portion of land to maintain a priest in Bentley church, Smercote. (*Dugdale's Warwickshire.*) He was now become an usher of the king's chamber, and being like another John, a Lackland, except for an estate for life in Crophill, which his brother had given him, the king bestowed on him the wardship and disposition in marriage of Thurstan de Ormeston. His ward had lands both in Lancashire and Wiltshire, and the gift thereof promised to be lucrative. (*Dodsworth* vol. lxxxvii. p. 91.) He received also a similar grant of the wardship and lands of William Lucy, a name which Shakspeare has

made famous, and this grant helped still further to improve the soldier's exchequer. William Lucy the ward afterwards became sir William, and was much employed by king Henry VI. in France and elsewhere. (*Privy Council Acts*, vi. 147, 148 and 154.)

John Butler was next summoned to join the expedition to France, and he sailed with the king having three archers in his retinue. (Nicholas's *Agincourt*, 377.)

Mindful that he was mortal and that royalty afforded no exemption from the perils of war, the king before he set out made his will, by which he left a legacy of 100*l.* a piece to John Butler and his fellow soldier Nicholas Merbury, whom he styles ushers of his chamber. (*Fœdera* ix., 61, 292.) Merbury took five lances to Agincourt. (Hunter's *Tract*, 46.)

John Butler did good service at Agincourt and, having returned safe, made some of his fellow soldiers at home regret that they were not there also. Arthur count of Richmond was one of the prisoners taken on that great field, and John Butler purchased the custody of him from William Meryng his captor, and paid him for it xx. marks. (*Privy Council Acts*, ii. 278.)

On the 30th May, 4 Henry V. (1416), when Nicholas Merbury again engaged to attend the king for a quarter of a year, he was paid xiii*l.* a day for himself and each of his men-at-arms, and vi*l.* a day for every archer (sir Peter Leycester lib. C, 285^a), which may show us the rate at which John Butler was paid.

In 1417 the king commissioned John Butler and Ralph Leyntall to treat with John duke of Britany for the observance of a truce, and to endeavour if possible to convert the truce into a peace. (*Fœdera* ix., 515, 521.)

The next year the king ordered his treasurer at Chester to pay to John Butler and William Pope, who like John Butler had been at Agincourt, 30*l.* in part of a sum of 60*l.* granted to them for three years out of the rents of Hugh Venables of Kinderton, deceased, and which, by reason of the minority of Hugh's sons, had devolved on the king towards repayment of the debt in which Thomas de Dutton knight, deceased, stood indebted for the

voyage to Harfleur. (*Cheshire Chamberl. Accts.* 5 Henry V.) This case is the reverse of that put by the duke of Norfolk in his plea before Rich. II.:

“My sovereign liege was in my debt,
Upon remainder of a dear account
Since last I went to France.”

(*Rich. II.*, a. i., s. i.)

In 1418, John Butler was a commissioner of musters, an office for which by his military experience he was well fitted. (*Fædera* ix., 544.) And the same year, probably in reward of his services, the king on the 21st January (1418), granted to him and John de Kyngsley of Nantwich, the wardship of John fitz John Griffyn knight, and the custody of all his lands in Betherton, Grayste, Saltsych, Wyghtereton, and Wylaston during the minority of the said John fitz John, they rendering 8*l.* for the same yearly. (*Ches. Records.*)

In 1419, John Butler had the honour (which shows how highly he was appreciated) of being appointed a commissioner to treat with France for a truce. (*Fædera* ix., 813.)

His continual employment in the busy affairs of the time, joined to the hardship of a soldier's life, had made John Butler prematurely old, and on the 22nd February 1420, feeling his end approaching, he made his will. By this will he leaves his body to be buried in the parish church of Warrington, in the chapel where his parents were buried. He leaves xx. marks to the repair of Warrington church, and xx. marks to the repair of the bridge there. He remembers the four orders of mendicants in London (from which London would seem to have been his usual place of residence.) The friars of the four friaries in Chester, Weryngton, Preston, and Lancaster are also to have an alms for the repose of his soul. He appoints his fellow soldier Nicholas Merbury, and William Garnet of Warrington, “*juris peritus*,” executors of his will, and he makes Mr. William Troutbeck, and Richard Walker, rector of Warrington, his supervisors. (See the will at Lambeth.)

William Garnet, one of the executors, was made the king's "serviens ad legem" for Cheshire and Flintshire, on the 11th June, 4 Henry V. (*Ches. Records.*) This will bears marks of his affectionate remembrance of Warrington, the place of his birth. After making his will he lingered three months, and died on the 26th May following.

Though the friars were still the objects of the satirist's scoff, their prayers and services nevertheless continued to be sought and valued. Walsingham, who wrote about this time (the reign of Henry VI.), says the friars of every order, like curs, challenged part of the bodies of all great persons dying, every one snatching for a piece of a dead corpse. Still the privilege of having a chantry within their precincts continued to be highly appreciated, and those who were able were willing to purchase it. In the year 1422, sir John Bolde of Bolde, knight, who in 4 Henry IV. (1403), had been retained to serve the king at Conway, and, ten years afterwards, was made captain and governor of that important castle and town, and who, in the king's wars in France, had probably seen much service, and was doubtless an important person in his day, purchased from the Warrington friars a chantry in their church. Brother Nicholas Spynk, reader in sacred theology (*sacræ theologiæ lector*), who was then their prior, and his convent, on the 24th June 1422, entered into an agreement with the knight and dame Elizabeth his wife, to grant, and did then grant, them a chantry at St. Augustine's altar in the body of their church, where from day to day mass should be said for the said sir John and dame Elizabeth, and for the souls of their ancestors and of dame Emma the late wife of the said sir John. This grant was the occasion of a great gathering in the priory; and amongst others who were present to witness it, were John abbot of Whalley, Thomas de Ellerbeck prior of Burscough, Henry de Halsall archdeacon of Chester, John lord Stanley, sir Peter de Legh and sir Henry le Norreys knights, Hamon le Mascy, John Sonke, and William Garnett "the Warrington lawyer," of whom we have heard before. The grant of this chantry has preserved to us the

only specimen of the friary seal, which on the one side bore the Butler arms, and on the other a shield partly composed of those of Simon de Montfort differenced with a chief. (*Kuerden's MSS.*, Coll. of Arms; from a copy taken by Dodsworth from the *Bold Deeds.*)

On the 14th June 1427, Hugh Arosmyth, a Warrington friar, was ordained an acolyte, and on the 20th December following a subdeacon. On the same 14th June, William Sonky and Robert Weryngton were ordained subdeacons at Colwich, and the former was ordained a deacon on the 20th December following, and a priest on the 28th February afterwards, at which time Robert Weryngton was also ordained a deacon.

Alicia Warburton, the widow of Peter Warburton, and by birth an Atherton of Bickerstath, made her will in the year 1428, and by it she bequeathed to each of the four orders of friars the sum of xl. pence. Her will was proved before the rural dean of Warrington in Prescot church on the 22nd May in that year, and attached to it is the rural dean's seal, of which a copy may be seen in the Warrington museum.

But the amount of Alicia Warburton's testamentary bounty was far surpassed by that which the friars next received. On the 3rd January 1436, Richard Sherburn of Mitton, one of whose ancestors, Alicia, the widow of Richard, son and heir of sir John Sherburn, afterwards married sir John Butler of Warrington, made his will, and acknowledging the connection of his family with Warrington, he remembered in his bequests, among others, our Warrington friars. The will, which was proved at York in 1440, contains these legacies :

"I gif and bewythe to the freers of Lancastre xxs. of silver, and the freers of Preston xiiis. ivd. of silver, and to the freers of Weryngton xiiis. ivd. of silver, and to the freers of Appilby xiiis. ivd. of silver."

(*York Wills*, by Surtees soc., ii. 76.)

Agnes, widow of the above Richard Sherburn, following her husband's example, on the 3rd November 1444, made her will,

by which she left to the freers of Preston *xxd.*, to the freers of Lancaster *xxd.*, to the freers of Weryington *xxd.*, and to the freers of Appulby *xxd.* (*Id.*, p. 106.)

On the 18th September in the same year Nicholas Marbury, a Warrington friar, was ordained priest at Colwich.* Legacies seem at this time to have flowed in upon the friary. In the year 1456 sir Geoffrey Mascy made his will, dated 1st March, and in it is the following bequest :

"I bewethe to ychon of the iiii. Orders of Freyey, to syng ychon a trentall of masses and to pr'ye for me, xiiis. iiiid."

A copy of the seal to this will is in the Warrington museum.

In 1460 sir Thomas Haryngton of Hornby made his will, in which there is this bequest which benefited the Warrington friars, though they are not specially named in it :

"Item lego fratribus de Lancastria, xls., et cuilibet conventui fratrum infra comitatum Lanc. et Westm. vis. viiid."

(*York Wills*, by Surtees soc., ii. 252.)

In the same year Henry Cowper, a Warrington friar, was ordained a deacon at Lichfield on the 19th December.

More than three centuries before the dissolution of the religious houses in England, there had grown up among them a custom of forming associations for a mutual interchange of prayers, which was carried out in this way : When the prior or other benefactor of any of the associated houses died, notice was sent to all the others, stating the day of the deceased's death ; such favourable circumstances in his character or history as might be thought fit ; with a few references to passages in Holy Scripture, and earnestly desiring the supplications of the associated houses for the repose of the departed soul. The notice, which was in the form of a roll, had many names. It was called either lamentatio, commen-

* Was this John Butler's fellow soldier who thus took refuge in the sanctuary of the church, and chose the Warrington friary for his home from affection for his fellow soldier ?

datio, planctus, suffragiorum petitio, or suffragiorum supplicatio. It had usually an ornamented heading, which was often illuminated and adorned with a representation of the deceased being placed in his tomb. It bore at the top the name and order of the religious house which sent it out, and every house visited, as an evidence of its having been so visited, was expected and required to write its name, title, and a short prayer upon the roll. This inscription, which was called a titulus, in the case of Durham priory ran thus :

“Titulus eccles. cath. Dunelm. B. Mar. Semp. virg. et S. Cuthberti presulis ordinis S. Ben. — Anima domini prioris et animæ omnium fidelium defunctorum per misericordiam Dei in pace requiescant.

“Vestris nostra damus pro nostris vestra rogamus.”

We may honour the affectionate reverence for a dead friend which first prompted these services, but none knows better than a saint that posthumous prayers will wipe no stain from his robe, and that except for the indirect good which is the result of all benevolent effort for others, these accumulated prayers were but vain repetitions.

The roll was sent out from the parent house by a brief-bearer, who was neither an ecclesiastic nor always a literate person. He carried with him a letter to the houses he visited recommending him to them, and asking hospitality for him ; but, except an occasional penny from some religious house which he visited and where he was favourably received, he had no remuneration besides his food. The brief-bearer's task was neither a short nor an easy one, for the associated houses were many and far apart. The priory of Durham, for instance, was associated with 639 others, to all of which he had to carry his roll. Institutions, however well intended, and however good in their beginning, will degenerate, and so the mortuary or bede roll at length degenerated into mere form ; the briefs came to be accounted a nuisance, and the bearers were called by ill names. One monastic poet thus wrote of them :

"Spare, oh ye vultures, oh we pray you spare,
Nor come with news of death our house to scare."

And again :

"No night owl's note more gloomy to the ear
Sounds, than your tidings of the grave and bier."

Their wandering life brought the brief-bearers much into company, and had a tendency to make their lives at variance with the solemn message they bore. They told, in their long circuits, strange tales of what they had seen and heard, and this ill habit acquired for one of the Durham messengers the name of the "lies maker."

The attention of ecclesiastical antiquaries has only lately been drawn to these mortuary or bede rolls, and by their inquiries on the subject three of such rolls have come to light, which in the years 1416, 1464 and 1482 were brought by the brief-bearer from Durham to the house of the Hermit friars at Warrington. On these the name or titulus of every house he visited has been written by some member of the house with a promise to fulfil the ordinary request :

"Vestris nostra damus
Pro nostris vestra rogamus."

"For yours our prayers we say,
Give yours for ours we pray."

When the brief-bearer in 1464 brought his roll to Warrington, asking prayers for William of Ebchester and John Burnby, two friars of Durham, one of the Hermit friars, or some member of the house, entered the usual titulus upon it, and spelt it *verbatim et literatim*, as follows: *Tytelus Fratrecum Eremitarum sa. sancta Augustine Werryng town et anima omnyum fidelyum defuc-dorum per masericordiam Dei in pace rey quest cant amen, &c.* (*Durham Ob. Roll*, Surtees soc., 39.)

The scribe, who thus contrived to break Priscian's head in nearly every word of this inscription, may be lauded for his inge-

nuity, but not for his Latinity. There were learned persons in the friary at Warrington at this time, and we may charitably hope and believe that none of the friars, but rather some person of no higher rank than the brief-bearer — possibly the porter at the convent gate — wrote this blundering titulus. At all events, his production makes the story credible, which tells of the garbling, by an ignorant hanger-on of the Franciscans, of that beautiful Latin grace before meat and after :

“Benedictus benedicat
Benedicto benedicatur”

“Franciscus *franciscat*
Francisco *franciscatur.*”

The scrawling hand in which the titulus at Warrington was written was quite of a piece with its Latinity.

CHAPTER IV.

ON the 7th March 1466 dame Cecil Torboke, the lady of Torboke, made her will, in which there are the following bequests :

“I will that the Blacke Frerys of Weryngton have iiis. ivd. Also I will that my sonne Richard [who perhaps was a priest] have my hallynge boke and chales, and such thyngs as belong to a prest to synge with, and all the brewing vessels that belongen to me ; also the Englysche boke of Hermit Hampole.” (*Hist. Lanc.*, iv. 8.)

Incongruous things are oddly jumbled together in this lady's legacy. A sacred vessel and sacred books to her son, and a priest's furniture, do not seem to accord well with the set of brewing vessels with which they are coupled. Hampole, from which the hermit took his name, was situated near Doncaster, and had in it a large convent of nuns. Although the nuns were of the Cistercian order themselves, they seem to have preferred to have a friar to hear their confessions, and it may be taken as a proof how high the friars of the four orders then stood in the Papal favour, that in the year 1275 the archbishop of York wrote letters to the prioresses of Hampole and Appleton, and authorised, nay, even recommended them, to choose their confessors from the friars minors and preachers. (*Antiquitates Furnesienses*, 85.) The hermit, whose name was Richard Rolle, was born at Hampole, and there where he had lived he died, and was buried on the 29th September in the year 1349. He was a man of much learning, and equal virtue. After passing some years in diligent study and in acquiring polite learning, he obtained a

doctor's degree. But seeing with abhorrence the dissolute lives and corrupt morals of the time, from which some even among the clergy were not exempt, he bade farewell to the world, and wholly devoted himself to a hermit's life, in which he persevered to the end, uniting with wonderful simplicity, singular austerity and mortification of the flesh, a devout contemplation of things divine. He embraced the hermit's life that he might escape the world's allurements, and submitting himself wholly to the divine will, consult his soul's health, and win others to virtue by the force of his own example. Partly whilst he was in the world, and partly after he had retired from it, he wrote a number of works all abounding in sound doctrine and solid piety, and exhibiting the sweetness of a christian spirit, of which this extract affords an example :

“ He that noweth well and con se
 What he is, was, and schal be,
 A wiser man may be told
 Whether he be young or old
 Then he that con al other thing,
 And of himself hath no knowing.”

After his death his sanctity was enhanced by reputed miracles, and, in process of time, he came to be ranked amongst the church's confessors. (*Pitsæus de Illustribus Scriptoribus*, p. 425.) Of his many works, that called *Stimulus Conscientiæ*, the *Pricke of Conscience*, written in verse both in English and in Latin, was probably the one left by dame Torboke's will to her son.

In the year 1477 three Warrington friars were ordained ; William Smyth a priest on 31st May, and John Tykel and John Borton respectively a deacon and a subdeacon on the 20th December.

At the burial of John Waynflete in 1481 we have the following entry, which shows that the friars were considered indispensable attendants at funerals, and that their attendance was paid for in indirect as well as direct ways. The entry is as follows : “ Pd. to iiij freers, for waste of their torches, iiij s.”

The friars at this time seem to have possessed lands in Warrington, of which we have not heard before, for on the 13th July 1482 we have an indenture which is curious as being an early specimen of English. It professes to be made "be twene Ric Browne pr'or of the F'ier Austyns of Weryngton on that one p'tie wt. the comyne assent of the co'vent of the same place, and Hug' Arosmyth and Agnes his wyfe on that other p'tie." By this lease the prior and convent granted, and to farm let to the said Hugh and Agnes, a parcel of ground lying in Warrington "callete" the Ashen orchard with "a kylne edifiecte on the same ground." To hold to the said Hugh and Agnes during "thair lyves," and after the decease of the said Hugh and Agnes the said prior and convent granted the said parcel of ground and "kylne" to William, James, Gilbert, Ralph, Thomas, Margaret, Amice, Elizabeth, Ellen, Grace and Alison Arosmyth, (the eleven) children of the said Hugh and Agnes, during their lives and the life of the longest liver of them :

"With free entree and outgate to the said p'cell of ground and kylne during the said terme, for the qwech p'cell of ground and kylne the said pr'or and co'vent graunten their selfe fullye contente and payte for the terme of xxi. yer' next foloyng aft'r the date of these p'sents."

And after the said term of xxi. years was ended :

"The forsaid Hugh, Agnes and children graunten to paye or mak' to be payete to the pr'or co'vent a jerly iiis. iiiiz. at the festez of Saynt Martyn, in wynter, and the nativitie of Saynt John Baptiste by even porcons. Also the said Hug' and Agnes graunten to shyfte a cestren at thys tyme stondyng wt'in the frers and sett hitt wt'in the forsaid p'cell of ground, and mak a sufficiant howse awer the same cestren at their awen costes. P'videt allwaye that hitt schall be lawfull to the said pr'or and co'vent to occupye the said kylne and cestren yerly duryng the said terme for makyng of thair malte to the use and expence of thair howse as fars ij tymes in the yer, so that the gyfe sufficiant warnyng therfor."

The inference to be drawn from this lease is that the friars' resources were at this time at a low ebb, for they anticipated by a present payment their future rent for twenty-one years ;

and, not being able to alter their own premises, they stipulate for the necessary removal of the cistern, and the building of a house over it, at the expense of the lessees. It is to be observed, however, that they prudently reserve the right to use the kylln twice a year to prepare the malt for brewing their own beer. The friars, very wisely as it would seem, brewed their own ale.

The number of friars in England was so very great that, according to one author, it amounted at one time to as many as thirty thousand. (Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 649.) An army like this must have pressed heavily upon the body politic by helping to eat the honey they did not make. The Hermit friars had houses at Lincoln, Newark, Burnham in Buckinghamshire, Gerlyston, Shrewsbury, Boston, Norwich and many other places. At Shrewsbury they are said to have introduced the miracle plays, and to have acted them in a sort of amphitheatre in the quarry. The martyrology of the friars at Norwich contained a very long calendar of all their Augustinian saints and benefactors; but in their monastery they had also a chapel of *scala cœli*, the ladder or stair to heaven. (*Notes and Queries*, May 7 1859, p. 384.) The chapel of *scala cœli* took its name from the holy stairway which was removed from Jerusalem to Rome, and up which it was accounted a meritorious act of penance for the devotee to ascend on his bare knees. There was a chapel of the same name at Windsor, which being afterwards removed to Westminster, Margaret of Richmond obtained the pope's bull of indulgence, by which all those who said or heard mass in it were to have equal remission of sins with those who heard mass in the parent chapel of the same name at Rome. This chapel, the latest novelty of the day, was in great favour with dying men, and, in consequence, it came in for many legacies; and the masses of *scala cœli* attracted so much attention that bishop Bale, one of the early reformers, who a few years later was very severe upon them, in one of his works makes the king charge the clergy with extorting money

“For legacys, trentalls with *scala cely* masses,

Whereby ye have made the people very asses.”

But a more modern writer has given us his idea of another scala coeli, or stairway to heaven, in the following lines, of which the translation is a paraphrase :

“Scala ad cœlum
Perseverantia bona
Patientia in adversis
Obedientia in preceptis
Patientia in vitâ
Contritio et confessio
Cognitio tui
Caritas.”

(*Notes and Queries*, June 12th 1852, p. 558.)

“He that would climb to heav’n above
Must first remember heav’n is love,
To know himself he next must learn,
And feel for sin a deep concern ;
Patiently walk the narrow way,
Nor from the holy precepts stray,
Repine not when his trials come,
They come to lead him nearer home ;
Whoso is steadfast to the end
Will by this stair to heav’n ascend.”

The order of Hermit friars of St. Augustine from time to time contributed its due proportion to the number of learned men who appeared in those ages ; and one of these, Thomas Penketh, entered the order within the walls of the friary at Warrington. Thomas Penketh was one of a family of gentlemen who had been long settled in the neighbouring village of that name, and who bore for their arms a shield *argent* with three kingfishers *proper* ; one of the Penkeths we find entered his pedigree at the Herald’s visitation in 1613. Thomas was born at the family place, probably about the year 1437. He was a younger son, for the family arms, which appeared in the friary windows, and which were probably placed there in his honour, were distinguished by a label. From the friary, which he pro-

bably left before taking holy orders, Penketh proceeded to Oxford, where, in the study of philosophy and the sciences as well as in acquiring a knowledge of theology, he made such progress that he attained the highest honours that the university had in store for her best scholars and divines. Subtle in intellect and wonderfully acute in scholastic disputation, he became so diligent a follower and so close an imitator of the "Subtle Doctor," as Duns Scotus, founder of the sect of Scotists, was called, as almost to rival in his greatest niceties that renowned scholar and schoolman himself, and at length it was said of him by the learned that he was as like his master as milk is to milk or as one egg is to another. So completely did he succeed in making all his master's works his own, that it was commonly said he could reproduce the whole of them from memory if they should happen to be lost. The great fame of his ability and learning having made his name known abroad as well as at home, he was pressed to visit Italy, and this falling in with his desire

"To see fair Padua, nursery of arts,"

and being offered the professorship of theology in the celebrated university of that city, with a liberal salary, he forthwith proceeded thither. He remained at Padua for some time; and while there, at the request of the university and his scholars, he prepared for press, and printed, it is believed at Venice, some of the most important works of Duns Scotus, a copy of one of which, his *Quidlibeta*, printed in the infancy of the printing art, and dated in 1474, forms one of the most curious specimens of early printed books in the Warrington museum and library. Its title-page or colophon, which, as usual in that age, is at the end, shows that Penketh was the editor, and that the printer was not a little vain of his art, and of his own proficiency in it:

"Hæc Albertus ego Stendal colibeta magister,
Altiloquentis Scoti formis uberrima pressi,
Religione sacra, et diva celeberrimus arte,
Clarus et ingenio Augustini ex ordine Thomas

Impressum purgavit opus studio integer omni,
Anglia cui patria et generis cognomine Penketh."

"Skill'd and most famous in the printer's art,
With zeal to use it on religion's part,
I, Albert Stendal, did these precepts rare,
Of the great Scotus, put to press with care,
Which Thomas Penketh, of St. Austin's school,
Native of England, did correct by rule."

In the year 1477, while he was still at Padua, Penketh printed at Venice his Commentaries *super secundum sententiarum* of John Bonaventura, the celebrated cardinal and saint of the Roman church, who was commonly called "The Seraphic Doctor." Penketh, whose life up to this time had not been spent in idleness, sustained no loss, but rather increased his reputation for learning, by his sojourn at Padua. Besides these works, Pitsæus, from whom our account of Penketh is principally derived, gives a long list of others which, either written or edited by him, enjoyed a good reputation in their day (Pitsæus' *Relationes Historicae*, p. 675.) On his return to England, about the year 1480, Penketh was created provincial of the Hermit friars of the order of St. Augustine in England and Ireland, and installed in their great house the Austin friars in London. But the great reputation he had gained by a life which had hitherto been unblemished he returned home to lose. When Richard, duke of Gloucester, after the death of Edward IV., forgetting "how sin will pluck on sin," was meditating how he could possess himself of the crown, he called to his counsel such persons as he thought, either by power or policy, were most likely to aid him. Among those with whom he thus took counsel was sir Edmund Shaw, the lord mayor of London, a man eager for advancement, and who he hoped might, for private ends, incline the city to favour his views. Among churchmen he looked out for such as had wit and were held in some esteem by the people for their learning, and who at the same time were not troubled with an over-scrupulous con-

science. One of these was John Shaw, clerk, the lord mayor's brother, and another was friar Penketh, two doctors of divinity, who were both great preachers and much esteemed by the people, but who, Holinshed says, "had more learning than virtue, and more fame than learning." A life spent as Penketh's had been in dealing with the subtle sophisms of casuistry, was not likely to make him very strong in resisting a powerful temptation, and the wily Gloucester thought he saw in him one with whom he might tamper; and so, as we learn from our immortal dramatist, when he summoned doctor Shaw to meet him, the summons included friar Penketh also:

"Go, Lovel, with all speed to Doctor Shaw;
Go thou to Friar Penker—bid them both
Meet me within this hour at Baynard's castle."
(Richard III., a. iii. s. vi.)

And to this unhappy selection by the protector of two of his instruments we are indebted for the only mention of any Warrington townsman which occurs throughout the pages of Shakespeare.

The sequel of this summons we are told by the chroniclers. Shaw preached "a sermon at Paul's cross in praise of the protector before his coronation, so full of tedious flattery that no man's ears could abide it." It was thought that Penketh was not in the protector's secret before the coronation, but, as is common, he yielded to flattery afterwards, and at Easter in the following year, many months after the coronation, he attempted to preach a sermon at St. Mary's hospital in favour of the protector, but his voice refused its office, and he was obliged to descend from the pulpit before he had half finished his sermon. Penketh lost his good name, and both the preachers lost their honesty. Doctor Shaw, who never came abroad after his sermon, soon sickened, and died of very shame. But Penketh outlived the discredit he had brought upon himself and his order, and was poorly rewarded by the protector with a pension of 10*l.* a year for his

life. (Hollinshed and Speed's *Chronicles*, and *Harl. MSS.*, 433, 127, *Cat.* i. 279.) Though he outlived the usurper, in whose cause he had made shipwreck of his character, he did not live very long to enjoy the pension which was the poor price he had obtained for it, for on the 21st May 1487 he died in the house of the Austin friars in London, and was buried in their cemetery. It is sad to think that Penketh returned to England to sully his name. If he had died at Padua before his return home, he had gone to the grave with honour. His fall from integrity not only lost him his character, but brought discredit upon his order.

CHAPTER V.

ON the 9th June 1498, Thomas Harrison, a Warrington friar, was ordained a deacon, and John Roberts, another Warrington friar, was ordained a priest; and these ordinations are the last from the friary which occur, or at least are the last that have been discovered. It is possible, however, that some subsequent ordinations may have been overlooked. The ordinations ceasing so immediately after Penketh's fall and death must be taken as one proof of the ill effect his conduct had had upon his order. Until that time numbers of good and learned names are to be found on the bede-roll of the Austin friars. Nicholas of Tolentino, their first saint, has been already mentioned. In 1290 they lost Thomas Borstal, a learned Hermit friar of Norwich, who, after attaining great honour at home, betook himself to Paris, and there became a doctor of the Sorbonne and a professor of theology. He wrote several works on scholastic divinity; and dying at Norwich, was buried in his monastery there in 1290. Robert de Worksop, one of the active agents of Edward II., who raised him to a bishopric, was a Hermit friar of Tickhill. In 1319, the king sent him to Rome to hasten on the work of making Thomas Cantilupe, bishop of Hereford, a saint. The bishop, a Lancashire man, had been chancellor to the king's father, and had filled the highest offices in church and state with honour. He was probably the last English bishop ever honoured with canonisation. Of Cantilupe a beautiful character is given in the "*Lives of the Saints*," which may make Lancashire proud of him; but his canonisation is there placed ten years too soon. (Butler's *Lives*

of the Saints, under Oct. 2, and *Fædera*, ii. 385.) Benedict of Norwich, a Hermit friar of that place, who was an eloquent preacher and a good divine, became his bishop's suffragan, and died at Norwich in 1340. In the same year died also George Grandfelt, a Hermit friar of Northampton, who after lecturing on philosophy and divinity at Cambridge travelled to Rome, became secretary to the cardinal bishop of Tusculum, and was afterwards made bishop by Benedict XI. He returned to England with letters of commendation from the cardinal to the bishop of Winchester. In 1347 Geoffrey Grosseld, another Hermit friar, became bishop of Ferns. John Goodwick, a Hermit friar of Lynn, who studied first at Cambridge and afterwards at Oxford, where he became prelector in divinity, was raised to the office of provincial of his order for England and Ireland, and died at Lynn in 1360. In 1366 Robert de Asketon, a Hermit friar, became bishop of Kildare. William Flete, a Hermit friar, was so devoted to solitude and heavenly contemplation, that, hearing of certain of his order in Italy who had resolved upon adopting a stricter rule, he hastened thither to join them, and remained with them to his death. In his contemplations he is said to have had a revelation of the woes coming upon England, and in his letters to have warned the provincial of his order of them. He died in Italy in 1380. Ralph Marham, a Lynn friar, who died in the same year, besides many other works, wrote a history of the world from its beginning to his own time, with an account of every king and kingdom, with its beginning, progress, increase and decay. John Hickley, an Augustinian hermit, who died the next year, was a doctor in theology, and of him it was said that he might take up the words of the Psalmist and say, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." He wrote a great book against Wycliffe and his followers. Thomas Winterton, a Hermit friar of Stamford, who died in 1382, was made a doctor at Oxford, and became provincial of his order in England. In a conference with Wycliffe, who had been his friend, and probably his fellow-student at

Oxford, he tried, but in vain, to win the reformer to his views. Simon Southray, another friar, who died the same year, became also a doctor at Oxford. He held disputations against Wycliffe, and wrote several books to confute him. Thomas Ashbourne, a Hermit friar of Stafford, died the same year. Having finished his studies and obtained a degree at Oxford, he strove with all his power to resist the doctrine of Wycliffe, and after writing and speaking much upon it, he was one of the synod which met at London and condemned the reformer's doctrine. In 1387, when the poet Petrarch was buried, the high honour of pronouncing his funeral oration was committed to the learned and eloquent Bonaventura da Praga, a hermit friar of the order of St. Augustine. (Campbell's *Life of Petrarch*, ii. 312.) In 1390 flourished Roger Twyford, who had the sobriquet of Roger Goodluck. He was an Austin friar, whose chief skill lay in his acquaintance with the works of the early fathers, but he was a man of prayer, and wrote, amongst other works, *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum* (The way of the mind to God). William Egmond, an Augustinian hermit of Stamford, who flourished in 1360, was an acute philosopher, a profound divine, and a vehement and eloquent preacher. He went to Rome, where the pope raised him to a bishopric, and he was afterwards made suffragan bishop of Lincoln. Besides other works, he wrote *Sermons for the People*. Peter Pateshull, an Austin hermit friar, who lived in 1390, became doctor and professor of theology at Oxford, where he obtained a great name until he adopted the opinions of Wycliffe, when, says his prejudiced biographer, "his last state became worse than the first," which is as much as to say that the first was bad. He wrote ballads and rhymes, and other like trifles, against the begging friars. Before he adopted the opinions of the Reformers, he wrote several works against heretics. John Waldby, a hermit friar of York, wrote many religious works, both in English and Latin. He was so looked up to by his order that by common consent they elected him their provincial. Beloved alike by clergy and laity, on the death of

Neville, archbishop of York, he was chosen to succeed him ; but the pope declined to confirm the election, and translated him to the archbishopric of Dublin. He died about the year 1393. In the following year, George Canton, a hermit friar, was made bishop of Cloyne. Thomas Edwardston, prior of the hermit friars at Clare, in Suffolk, became a doctor of theology in Oxford, and was afterwards confessor to the duke of Clarence, by whose favour he was made a bishop in Ireland. He wrote several works, and at his death, which happened in 1396, was buried in his house at Clare. In 1399, John Waltham, a hermit friar, was made bishop of Ossory. Robert Waldby, probably a brother of the John Waldby before mentioned, was an Austin hermit friar. After pursuing his studies diligently at home, he went with the Black Prince to France, to pursue his studies at Toulouse, which he followed with such success that, besides becoming skilled in the canon and civil law, he acquired a knowledge of medicine, and became an exact philosopher and theologian. He was made a bishop in Gascony, or more probably in Aquitaine, afterwards he was successively bishop of Man, Dublin and Chichester, and finally archbishop of Dublin, on which occasion these lines, preserved by Weever in his *Funeral Monuments*, were written :

“Tunc Robertus fratris Augustini,
Ascendit in cathedram primatis Paulini.”

He wrote many books, and, dying in 1339, was buried at Westminster, with this epitaph :

“Hic fuit expertus quovis in jure Robertus
De Walbi dictus, nunc est sub marmore strictus,
Sacre scripturæ doctor fuit et genituræ
Ingenuus medicus et plebis.”

In 1406, Alexander Totington, an Augustine hermit friar, was made bishop of Norwich.

William Wells, otherwise Fountains, a hermit friar of Lynn, became doctor of theology at Cambridge. He was remarkable for his skill in disputations and for his learned sermons. His

various acquirements, with his great prudence and knowledge of business, gained him so much popularity with his order that they made him their provincial in England for more than twenty years, and in that character he signed the ordinance, already mentioned as made in the reign of Henry IV., respecting young friars. He left many works behind him, and died in 1421, having chosen his place of rest at Lynn, where he was born.

In 1422, John de Rishberry, an Augustinian hermit friar, was made bishop of Emly. John Lowe, doctor of divinity at Oxford, prior of the Austin friars in London, and afterwards provincial of the order in England, was a benefactor of many books to the library of the house in London, besides giving it his own works. His great virtue and deserts recommended him to Henry VI., who made him one of his counsel, and appointed him at first bishop of St. Asaph, and afterwards of Rochester, where he died in 1436. Among the great men of the time of Henry VI. an Augustinian friar of the name of Henry de Virinaria is commended in the *Cotton MSS.* (Cat. p. 53.) John Brome, reader in sacred theology and prior of the Hermit friars at Gorleston-by-Yarmouth, built a library in that house, and furnished it with the most rare books, which but for him, it is said, would have perished. He not only collected books, but spent much time in reading them, and of him it is said :

“Sedulus ætatis menses consumpsit et annos.”

He died in 1449, and was buried in his monastery. John, of Bury St. Edmunds, a hermit friar of the house at Clare, became a doctor of divinity at Cambridge, and rose to be provincial of his order in England and Ireland. Reginald Peacock, bishop, first of St. Asaph and then of Chichester, having espoused some new opinions, Bury endeavoured to confute him. He flourished in the year 1460. John Slolely, a hermit friar of Norwich, took a doctor's degree at Cambridge, and was made provincial of his order throughout England. He administered his office faithfully ; he preached frequently and with much effect to the people.

He died, and was buried in the Austin friary at Norwich, on 4th June, 1447. Bernard André, an Austin friar of Toulouse, who came to England with Henry VII., was afterwards his poet laureate, and wrote his life and many other works, some of which have lately been published by the master of the rolls. John Capgrave, a hermit friar of Canterbury, was made doctor of divinity at Oxford, and became provincial of the order throughout England. He was universally accounted a learned man, an acute philosopher, and a sound divine. Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, surnamed The Good, became his patron, and took him for his confessor. Besides his commentaries on many of the books of the *Bible*, the historian and the antiquary are indebted to him for a chronicle of the kings of England and for the lives of the illustrious Henries; the latter work has lately been published under the authority of the master of the rolls. Capgrave died about the year 1464; and here we end our account of the illustrious Austin friars (which has been taken principally from the pages of Pitsæus *De Illustribus Scriptoribus*), because in that year Luther, the most renowned of all the hermit friars, was born to inflict a great blow on their order, and confer a greater benefit on mankind.

It would seem that doctor Shaw, as well as friar Penketh, his guilty companion, was from this neighbourhood, for his brother, sir Edmund, the lord mayor, who was called to his account in the same year as Penketh, left his property to the Goldsmith's company to found the now flourishing grammar school at Stockport. (*Athenæum*, 1867, p. 215.) Not one single tradition as to friar Penketh lingers about his old haunts at Warrington. If to his studious habits, and his learning and acquirements as a theologian and a disputant, which gained him his great name among scholars, he had added the knowledge of alchemy, astrology, and the black arts, which impress the popular mind, some reminiscence of him, it is probable, would have been found still lingering round his old home, even after the hand of the spoiler had long swept over its precincts. He could not say as Wolsey did,

“ My robe,
And my integrity to heaven, is all
I dare now call mine own,”

for he had lost his integrity and suffered shipwreck of his fame, and in his moments of remorse and distress, and in the perplexity of his latter years, he doubtless often looked back with regret to the retired seclusion of his youth, where he had known the peace to which he was now a stranger.

But the Warrington friars had not yet lost all their friends, for on the 15th June 1504, when Gilbert Southworth of Croft, gentleman, made his will, he wrote as follows :

“ I bequethe my body to be buryed in the cemetare of ye church of Jhesus belonging to ye brethren of Seinte Austen, in Weryngton, and I will that an *obbet* be kepte solely ev'ry yere by the space of V yeres aft'r my decease, and that two of ye black freers shall syng on ye daye of my decease a masse of *requiem* by notes, and say *de profundis* for my sawll, and all Cristen sawlls, and to everych of ye frerys p'sent at the *dirige* over nyght, I give viid., and one the morrowe masse iiis. to be distributed to pore peple by my executors.” (*Lancashire Chantries*, Chetham soc., vol. i. p. 65.)

On 12th August, 20 Henry VII. (1505), a scene peculiar to feudal times and to an age now long since gone by, was enacted in the friary at Warrington. Robert Fitz-William Blundell, one of sir Thomas Boteler's retainers, then appeared at the friary to do homage to his liege lord for the lands which he held under him. Sir Thomas Boteler is seated in state in the great hall of the friary with sir William Plumtre his chaplain, Hugh Boteler his kinsman, and Thomas More and many other friends standing about him, amongst whom the prior was probably one. Robert Fitz-William Blundell, who has lately come to his inheritance, clad probably in plate and mail, enters the hall. Way is made for him through the bystanders ; he advances towards sir Thomas, lays aside his sword, unclasps his helmet, and, uncovering his head, kneels at the knight's feet. And now, after the bailiff has thrice cried “ Oyez ! ” he places his clasped hands

between those of sir Thomas, and repeats aloud, after the seneschal, this profession of homage : " Know ye sir Thomas Boteler, knight, my liege lord, that I, Robert, the son of William Blundell, do become your man from this day forward to the end of my days for life and members, and worldly honour, and unto you I will be faithful, and will bear true faith for the lands I hold of you, saving only the faith I owe to my sovereign lord king Henry." Sir Thomas then stooping from his seat kissed his liegeman on the cheek. Does not some portion of this ceremony recall to our minds the scene in which Eliezer placed his hand under Abraham's thigh and swore an oath to him? After he had done his homage, Robert Fitz-William Blundell placed his hands upon the Gospels, and, slowly repeating it after the seneschal, took the following oath : " I do swear that I will be true and faithful to you, sir Thomas Boteler, knight, my liege lord, and that I will bear you true faith and fealty for the lands and tenements I hold of you, and will truly do and perform the customs and services I owe you, so help me Heaven and all the saints," and then having kissed the book, he rose from his knees. The ceremony was ended, the bailiff again cried " Oyez !" and the company dispersed.

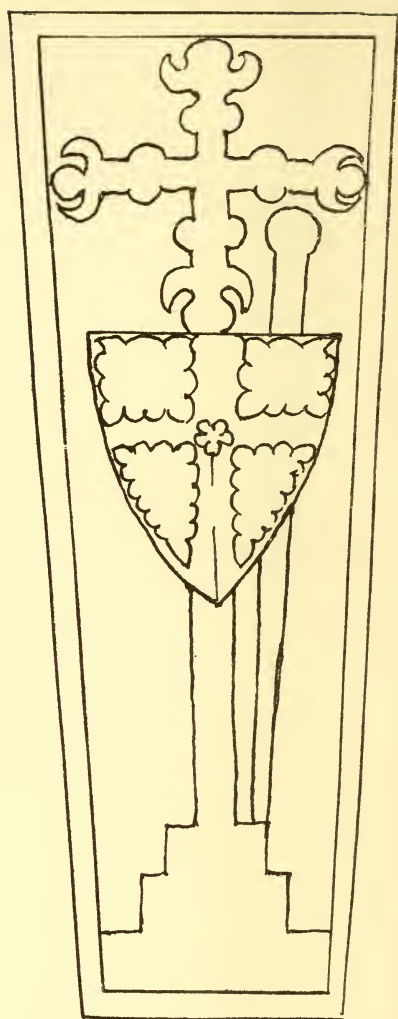
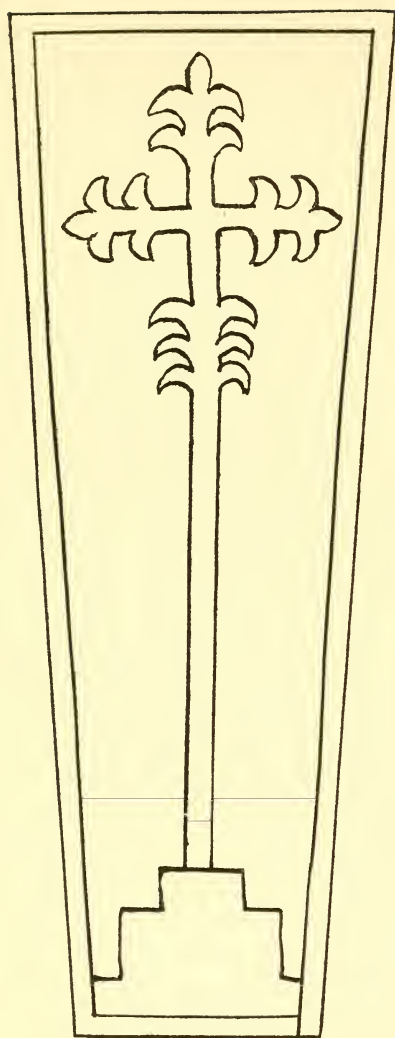
The share which Penketh had taken in furthering the dark plans of the usurper, Richard, was not calculated to silence the carpings in which, as we have seen, both the poets and the chroniclers had from time to time indulged at the expense of the mendicant orders, and we are, therefore, not surprised to find that great scholar Erasmus lifting up his voice and joining in the cry against them. In his *Praise of Folly*, amongst the severe things he says of many other professions and classes of men, he writes thus of the mendicant orders, " That though this kynde of men be commonly so abhorred as, even to meete with them at unawares it is taken for a signe of evill lucke all the daie after ; yet, heaven ! how they make themselves to be more than cherubyns. For first they hold it a great holinesse to meddle so little with bookes and learning as scarce to knowe how to reade their

own names ; and when they rore foorth (lyke a many of asses) in their monasteries a number of psalmes not understood, than they were verilie to fede saintes eares with a marvellous melody." (*Morie Encomium*, translated by sir Thomas Chandler.) This work appeared in 1511, but the bounty of some testators was still directed to the Austin friars. In 1515, John Wastell, of Bury St. Edmunds, left by his will to their house at Cambridge a legacy of *xiid.* (*Athenæum*, 1850, p. 1152.) About this time sir Richard Slawright, the prior of the hermit friars at Warrington, seems to have been held in much respect, for on the 24th October in the following year, when sir Thomas Boteler, probably in the same hall where we have seen him receiving his vassal's homage, signed a receipt for a sum of money, Richard Slawright, the prior, was called in to witness it ; and the same year he was present and saw possession delivered of a house in the High street, leased by Randle Sonkey to Oliver Berdisley.

The Lestranges of Hunstanton seem at this time to have been bountiful friends to the Austin friars of that place, for their household book in the year 1520 records the gift of *lxviii.* to the prior of that house going to the general chapter. In the same year the Warrington Austin friars, who had found their earliest friends in the Botelers of Bewsey, still retained a place in their affections ; and when sir Thomas Boteler, its then head, made his will, on 16th August 1520, he directed "x marks in money to be yeven to the pore frere howse of Waryngton towards the reparation and ornaments of the same, at the discretion of his executors," and prior Richard Slawright was again called in to witness it. Still complaints of the friars were surging against the king's gates. One of these, which is contained in a petition presented against the exactions of friars, pardoners and somners, takes the fables of king Arthur for undoubted truth, and says, "The noble Arthur had never been able to carry his army to the foot of the mountains to resist the coming down of Lucius, the emperor, if such yearly exactions had been taken of the people."

In 13 Henry VIII. (1521) certain payments by sir Piers Legh to sir Thomas Boteler, were made on the altar of Our Lady in the friar's church at Warrington, in the presence of sir Richard Slawright, the prior.

Alice, the widow of Ralph Byrom, made her will on 26th January 1524, in which there is contained the following bequest: "I leve to the frere house of Weryngton for to pray for my soule and all Crysten soules xs." (*Lanc. and Ches. Wills*, pt. ii. p. 180.) When George Bothe, esq., of Dunham Massey, made his will on 6th October 1531, he gave by it the following legacies: "I geve to ye P'or and ye Freres of Weryngton ten shillyngs to say a trentall of masses for my soule. Item to ye same Pr'or of Weryngton towards the gildyng of Our Ladie iij*s.* iiij*d.*" (*Id.* pt. i. p. 94.) Hitherto we have seen but four orders of mendicants — the Dominicans or preachers, the Minorites or Grey friars, the Carmelites or White friars, and the Augustines; but the will of sir William Fitz-William of London, in 26 Henry VIII. (1534), adds to these another order, the Crossed or Crutched friars, and gives to each order *v*li.**, "to the intent they should bring forth his corpse out of the liberties of the said city, and to have in each of the said places a trentall of masses." (*Collins' Peerage*, vol. iv. p. 388.)



TOMB-STONES FROM THE FRIARY.

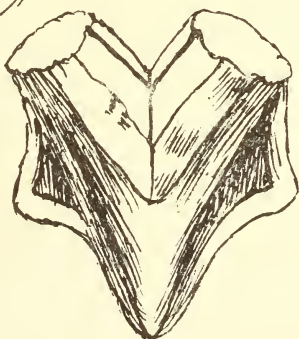
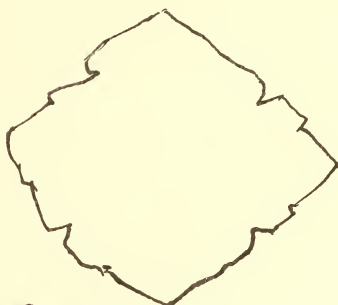
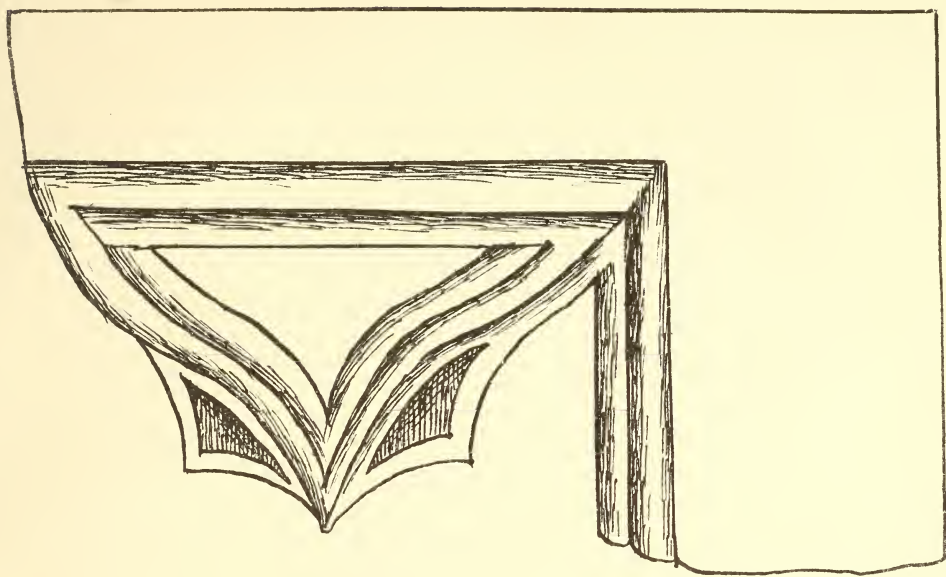
CHAPTER VI.

THE friary which had now been so long established in Warrington had used its opportunities well, and had made many friends. Like a healthy plant it had sent out its roots far and wide, and was now connected with the place by many relations which were interlaced in the soil. The Boydells, the Duttons, and some others of the gentry had founded chantries in the place, where perpetual prayers and masses were to be offered up and said for their families. The Botelers, the Torbokes, the Athertons, the Sherburnes, the Warburtons, and many others were enrolled amongst the benefactors of the house ; and amongst the names of those who had put on the friar's frock within its walls might be reckoned those of Banastre, Holland, Appleton, Eltonhed, De la Mare, Sefton, Leylond, Knowsley, Sankey, Arrowsmith, Marbury and Penketh, all members of respectable local families, who had thus given pledges of their adherence to St. Austin's rule. There were other families of some consequence in and around Warrington who had made choice of the friars' cemetery as a place in which to lay their dead. Sir William Fitz-Almeric Boteler, the patron and probable founder of the house, was buried in its church, and honoured with the effigy there which has been already described, and so also was his descendant, another sir William Boteler, who died of dysentery before the walls of Harfleur, on the eve of the battle of Agincourt. A monumental stone, now in the Warrington museum, was once placed in the friary cemetery to commemorate another of its benefactors. Upon it there is sculptured a handsome floriated cross and a knight's sword, but unfortunately there are neither

arms nor inscription upon it to give us its owner's name. The stone is about seven feet long, and about a foot and a half broad at the top, from which it gradually narrows a little to the bottom. Beneath it, when it was taken up, there was found lying in a rude coffin, hollowed out of a solid part of a tree, the skeleton of a man with a withy stick placed across his left arm. The upper part of the skull appeared to have been broken off and displaced. Willow wands, such as that found in the coffin, have been found in similar coffins elsewhere, and while the sculptured sword upon the stone and the fractured skull beneath it may be supposed to mean that the deceased was some knight or warrior who had died in battle, the willow wand in his hands may signify the palm of victory which he had acquired by his death. Amongst others who sought to lay the bones of their departed friends in the friary cemetery, in the hope, when they wrote on each *Requiescat in pace*, that they would not be vain words, as, alas! they have proved to be, were the Holcrofts, a family who took their name from a neighbouring village where they had long been settled. One of this family, probably John Holcroft, who married Margaret, the daughter of Hamlet Massy of Rixton, was commemorated in the friary cemetery by a slab, which may now be seen in the Warrington museum. Upon it there is sculptured a Calvary cross *ragulée*, with a two-handed sword by its side, and suspended from the cross a shield, having on it the Holcroft arms, *argent* a cross engrailed, *sable* within a bordure, engrailed *of the second*.

Some few other fragments of the friary also remain in the Warrington museum. One of these, a section of a pillar of the friary church, is a rude specimen of early-English work, which may be best described as a multangular column, having two of its sides less deeply channelled and moulded than the others. Another of these fragments is the upper part of the mullion of one of the church windows of Decorated work, which has cusps and is channelled to receive glass. And a third fragment is half the top of a square-headed trefoil window, of good

length 2ft 7in. ----->



FRAGMENTS from the FRIARY.

Decorated work, very like the windows taken from Runcorn church when it was rebuilt a few years ago.

In the reverend G. Piccope's family there has been preserved an ancient oak chest or coffer, which is said to have once formed part of the priory furniture. Upon this chest are carved several shields of arms, amongst which are the three falcons of the Athertons, and round the chest runs this description: "*In operibus domini credite,*" which may have given rise to the tradition that it came from the friary. The chest, it appears, was purchased by its present owners at the sale of the furniture at Atherton hall, and its claim to have belonged originally to the friary seems to rest upon slender foundation.

About the end of the twelfth century, after most of the great monasteries had been founded and enriched by the piety of the times, wealth had begun to produce its usual fruits, and to make the religious more lax in their rule, and the laity more ready to believe in the efficacy of vicarious religion. The belief in the efficacy of the church's prayers and masses for the souls of their benefactors, which prayers and masses might always be purchased in some monastery for money, was then universal. The monks too greedily sought to acquire for masses and obits, and sometimes for money, the advowson or perpetual right of presentation to parish churches. Having once acquired the patronage of any living, and obtained the king's license to appropriate it, they sent one of their monks to do the duty of the church, and, after allowing him some small stipend, they applied all the rest to the purposes of the monastery. This was a two-fold evil: it substituted a hireling for the parson, and deprived the parish of the hospitality and charity, as well as example, they had a right to expect from him. Upon the religious houses, too, it had an ill effect, for it filled their coffers too full, swelled the owners with pride, encouraged extravagance in expenditure, and induced the laity to think that religion and poverty had suffered a divorce. The result of all this was that in many places the work of the church was either neglected, or performed

only in a slovenly or perfunctory manner. The revival of religion which was promised by the Austin friars and the other mendicants at their first origin was hailed with satisfaction by the people; and when the friars arrived, they spread speedily over the land, and acquired great influence among all classes by their zeal and energy, and the light of learning by which many of them, and particularly the Augustinians, as we have seen, were from time to time distinguished. The friars had two enemies—the monks and the regular clergy—both of whom disliked them as rivals, and connived, if they did not rejoice, at the sarcasms which the chroniclers and the poets levelled at them. But as time rolled on, success made the friars remiss, and justified the satires composed at their expense. Complaints, too, were made of them by some greedy courtiers, who were awaiting the spoil, which complaints at length reached the king, and could no longer be silenced; so that evil days were now approaching not only our ancient priory, but all similar establishments, and omens which could neither be mistaken nor averted presaged their speedy downfall. No particular account has come down to us of how or when the friary passed away from its old possessors, and consequently we do not know whether it was quietly surrendered, or whether the prior and his brethren, then probably reduced to a few in number, were forcibly driven out from their home and its gates finally closed against them, when the doom of the lesser monasteries was sealed by the passing of the Act of 27 Henry VIII. c. 28 (1536), which absolutely gave up to the king all the religious houses having a less income than 200*l.* a year. And thus the presage, penned by the poet Langland long before, was fulfilled and seemed a prophecy:

“And ther shall come a king and confesse your religious,
And bete you as the Bible telleth for breaking of your rule.”

Of the 376 houses which were thus suppressed at a blow, Warrington friary was probably one of the smallest.

Sir Richard Slawright had probably been made general or

provincial of the order, and had ceased to be the prior of Warrington, when its fate was sealed, for the inquisition taken on 4th July 1523, after the death of his patron, sir Thomas Boteler, includes amongst his tenants the name "Ricard. Gener. Augustini," which must mean, we think, sir Richard Slawright. But whoever was the last prior, let us charitably hope that he and his few remaining brethren, when they bade farewell to their long-loved home, and "cast one longing lingering look behind," were not left to the cold but only charity allowed them by the proviso in another statute, which, while admitting their poverty, makes no provision to relieve it except the permission to beg. "Inasmuch," says this statute, "as Friars mendiantes have little or nothing to lyve uppon, but only by the charitie and almes of Xtien people, this Act shall not be p'judicial to any p'sonne for giving of y'm in gen'rl or p'ticuler any ma'ner of almes in money, vitaille, or other thing, nor to them for being out of their places, or for passing abroad to gather the almes and charitie of Christen people, or for contynuance of their religion, as they have been accustomed to do."

For a few but only for a few years after the departure of its old inmates, the friary remained in the king's hands; but there were cormorants abroad who were hungering for the spoil, and to one of these, Thomas Holcroft, the king on the 18th June, 32 Henry VIII. (1540), granted not only the site of the Austin friary at Warrington, but also the priory of Cartmel, and several other properties of a similar kind. (*Jones's Index to the Excheq. Records*, 32 Henry VIII.) But the Reformation begun under Henry was not to proceed to the end without a check. Unawed by the example of her stern father, queen Mary would have restored the old religion and brought back the monks and friars; but, foreseeing what might come, Thomas Holcroft, now sir Thomas, who had in him more of the willow than the oak, and whose principles were of no decided colour, having obtained the place of marshal to the queen, used his influence at court so well that he obtained the queen's confirmation to him of her father's grant. (*Ib.* 1 & 2 Philip and Mary.)

But the perils that awaited the purchasers of monastic property, many and various in that age, were not yet over; and so sir Thomas Holcroft found it on the accession of queen Elizabeth to the throne. He had been haunted in her sister's reign by the fear of having his illgotten possessions reclaimed by their old owners, but now, under the new queen, there was a new danger. Many persons being then suspected of holding lands to superstitious uses, commissions were issued to seize all such lands as forfeit to the crown, and, amongst others, the purchaser of the Austin friary at Warrington was summoned to show in the queen's court why he should not either give it up or produce the title by which he held it. (*Ib.* 5 Elizabeth.) As he was never dispossessed of it, however, we may presume that his title to his purchase was allowed on his showing the grant made to him by the queen's father. In the meantime sir Thomas, who had not acquired the friary to let it lie idle, but to be put to use and made merchandise of, proceeded to deal with it as if his title were indefeasible; and on the 27th September, in 35 Henry VIII. (1543), after a possession of three years, having found a purchaser to his mind, he sold the friary to one John Cawdwell for the sum of 126*l.*, and conveyed it to him by the description of:

"All that his scyt of the late house of Austen Freirs of Weryngton, w[']hin the countie of Lanc[']r., nowe dissolved, wth. all his messuages, housses, buyldings, barnes, stabuls, duff housses, orchards, gardens, lands, and grounds, as well w[']tin as w[']oute the scyte, walke, circuyte, and pr[']ycints of the said late housse of Austen Freirs beyng. Also one medow called Blanche Medow, contg. three acres. Also a housse called the Kylene Housse. Also a crofte, and one duffe housse thereon builded. Also too little gardens and too orchards. Also five tenements or cottages. Also one other garden, all in Weryngton, to the said housse of Austen Freirs, belongynge and apperteynynge, wch. the saide Thomas Holcroft late had of the gyfte and graunte of our souraigne lord Kyng Henry the Eighth, by his letters patent, bearyng date at Westm[']r the eyghtene daye of June, in the xxxiiij. yere of his gracious raygne."

By this conveyance John Cawdwall covenanted

“Not to lette or interrupte the inhabitauntes of the towne of Weryngten aforesayde for the usage and occupation of the church of the late Freirs aforesayde according unto a lease thereof mayd by the sayd Thomas Holcroft unto Sir William Plumtre clerke, and also that he would suffer the said Thomas Holcroft to have the ingresse and regresse into all and singular the pr'mysse to carrie away all the stone walls of the sayde late Freirs whyche at thys pr'sent tyme be not covered wth. anie rouff.”

What we have to say of the lease to Plumtre we reserve to a future opportunity, but the latter part of Cawdwall's covenant suggests the thought that sir Thomas, fearful of what might follow and anxious to make money of his purchase, was unroofing the cherished home of the old friars and selling the materials, so that the former inmates might not find shelter in it, if unhappily for him they should return. After sir Thomas's death, his son and heir of both his names, who was one of the king's privy chamber, on the 7th May, 42 Elizabeth (1600), and Thomas Caldwell of Appleton, gent., sold and conveyed the site of Warrington friary to Thomas Ireland, esquire. This conveyance contains no allusion to the former reservation as to the use of the friary church, but as it contains the attornment of John Ashworth, the then rector of Warrington, who acknowledges himself to be the purchaser's tenant, it is probable that he made the attornment in consequence of being then in possession of the friary church. (*Hale Deeds.*)

A part of the property of the Warrington hermit friars, which has not been mentioned before, occurs in a deed dated so late as 20th October, 8 James I. (1610), when John Southworth of Warrington, gentleman, conveyed to Thos. Ireland, esquire, all that parcel of land and ground called “The Eremitts Yorde,” lying in Stockton, Hull, and Appleton, or any of them, in the county of Chester, then or late in the tenure, holding, or occupation of Alice Sothworth, widow, grandmother of the said John. (*Hale Deeds.*) It may be difficult to ascertain, from the extreme vague-

ness of the description of it in the above conveyance, where this property was situated. It is not improbable, however, that it was somewhere either on the bridge at Wilderspool or near the meeting of the cross roads at Stockton heath, at either of which places a friar would be advantageously placed to collect alms. Having seen the Warrington friary pass out of the hands of its old possessors and become a lay fee, we propose, before returning to the friary church, to give a few particulars of its new owner and his family.

Thomas Holcroft, the purchaser of the friary, and the whole-sale dealer in the properties of the dissolved monasteries, was the second son of John Holcroft, esquire, by his wife Margaret, the daughter of Hamlet Massy of Rixton. His family had been long settled in the neighbouring hamlet of Holcroft, and one of them, Adam de Holcroft, in 1334, received the king's commands to march with horse and arms on the king's service into Scotland. (*Rot. Scot.*, i. 307.) Thomas being a younger son, and but a cadet of the house, proceeded to London to push his fortune. There the king made him one of the squires of his body, and there he married Juliana, the daughter and heiress of Nicholas Jennings, one of the aldermen of the city. His office at court gave him station, and his marriage gave him fortune, both of which he seems to have determined to use in a trading spirit. His position at court enabled him to scent from afar the coming dissolution of the religious houses, and he saw how advantageously, whenever it should happen, the alderman's money might be employed in purchasing some of the spoils. We have already seen that on the 10th March 1540, he acquired the friary at Warrington, the priory of Cartmel, and some other monastic properties. It was not out of any regard for the place of sepulture of his ancestors, still less from any reverence for religion, that he was induced to covet the possession of the friary at Warrington. Probably when he bought it no higher object was in his thoughts than to advance his fortune without caring much as to the means, which agreed well with the bird of prey on his

crest, namely, "a raven, the *dexter* claw raised and brandishing a sword *proper* pommeled *gules*." About the same time he was meditating a purchase of a monastic property far larger in extent, nothing less than the venerable abbey of Vale Royal. He had been appointed a commissioner to treat with the abbot for its surrender, and in his zeal to attain his end and obtain what he coveted he is said to have extorted, if not absolutely forged, the abbot's signature to the instrument of surrender, which, coupled with the sequel, shows with how covetous and greedy an eye he followed his trail. For three centuries the abbot of Vale Royal, in his pastoral and secluded home, had ranked with the barons of the land. He had his seneschal and under-seneschal, his page to attend his steps, and his palfrey-man to hold his horse, and at Flodden the heads of the knightly houses of Holford and Bostock had attended him and fought under his orders; but a dark cloud was now gathering over the house and soon the storm burst; the abbey was seized into the king's hands, and John Harwood, the last abbot, though he had for his seneschal no less a person than lord Cromwell himself, received "the knock of a king," which had been foretold by John Longland. On the 7th March, 33 Henry VIII. (1542), the king, in consideration of a sum of 450*l.* and a perpetual ground-rent of 3*l.* 5*s.* 8*d.*, granted to Thomas Holcroft in fee "the scite of the abbey of Vale Royal, with the granges of Conersley, Bradford, Ernesley and Merton, Petty Pool Hill and Dam, and Bradford Mylne, in the parish of Whitegate, Hefferston Grange and Onston Mylne in the parish of Weaverham, Ernesley House in Weaverham, and Whitegate and the Pool of Oakmere." (*Hist. Chesh.*, ii. 70, *et seq.*) In the year 1544, when the earl of Hertford marched into Scotland, Thomas Holcroft (whose ancestor Adam de Holcroft, as we have seen, made his first campaign in that country) received a command in the host, and on the 3rd May in that year, when Leith was attacked and so easily won that its panic-stricken defenders forgot their usual courage and took to flight, which gave the chronicler occasion to say of them,

“Exhorrent ut dama canes, ut cerva leones,”

Holcroft won a banneret's spurs, and became sir Thomas Holcroft, knight, but the honour fell on so many heads at the same time that its value was lessened, especially when it came in return for a victory which rather happened than was won. (Burn's *Hist. Westmoreland*, pref., lxii., lxv., lxvi., lxx.) Sir Thomas Holcroft after the purchase of Vale Royal — a purchase which the city alderman's money had helped him to make — took up his abode at the old abbey and made it his family seat. He was, however, but an unpopular successor to the abbot, and the poet's lines used on another occasion might also have been quoted in his case —

“And Hemsley, once proud Buckingham's delight,
Slides to a scrivener or a city knight.”

On the 13th July 1595, it was his misfortune to lose his good wife by death, but for some reason, which does not appear, she was not interred until the 25th August following, when her funeral took place at Whitegate. (*Hist. Chesh.*, ii. 70, *et seq.*) Sir Thomas, who did not long survive her, appears to have been buried at Weaverham. There is a very confused account given of him by Mr. Baines, who says that he was the *King's* receiver in 1595, a time when there was no king. (*Hist. Lanc.*, iii. 129.) He was dead before 21st September 1597, for on that day his son, of both his names, presented Hamo Percival to the vacant living of Whitegate. In the year 1600 Thomas Holcroft the son sued out a writ of *ad quod damnum* respecting a road in Over. (*Ches. Records.*) In 1603, being made a gentleman of the privy chamber, and afterwards knighted, when he became sir Thomas Holcroft the second, he was made bailiff of the honour of Halton, an office which he continued to hold until the year 1611. When the herald visited Cheshire in 1613, sir Thomas Holcroft appeared before him. He was twice married, and at the herald's visitation his son Thomas Holcroft (by his first wife Elizabeth, daughter of sir Edward Fitton) who was then married to Mary,

the daughter of Henry Talbot, by whom he appears to have had issue, also appeared and was entered in family pedigree by the herald.

But Vale Royal was not destined to be long held by its new lords, the Holcrofts, who in 1616 sold it to lady Cholmondeley, "the bold lady of Cheshire," as king James called her when visiting her at Vale Royal in 1617.

CHAPTER VII.

THE friary at Warrington, after having flourished for nearly three centuries, was now fast falling to ruin. While it stood twelve or more priors in succession had ruled over the house and its cowed inmates. The names of these priors, so far as they have been recovered, appear to be as follows :

- 1265. Richard, the hermit.
William, the freeman.
Gilbert, the anchorite.
- 1332. Richard de Utrington.
- 1366. John de Knowsale.
- 1379. William de Eltonhead.
- 1394. John de Knowsley.
- 1404. Geoffrey Banastre, S.T.P.
- 1410. John Boldycar.
- 1422. Nicholas Spynk, S.T.L.
- 1482. Richard Browne.
- 1520. Sir Richard Slawright, who was afterwards provincial
or general over the order of Austin friars throughout
England.
- 1522. Willielmus Hermetott, who occurs amongst the tenants
in sir Tho. Boteler's *Inq. p. m.*, may have succeeded
Slawright as prior when the latter became general of
the order.

Sir Thomas Boteler, the aged friend and patron of the house, having been called to his rest a few years before, was spared the pain of witnessing its downfall and ruin. His chaplain however, sir William Plumtre, always his faithful friend, confessor and adviser, who had probably been with him at Flodden, and by whom

he was attended when he made his will, and when he received the homage of his tenants, as well as on all other important occasions, survived him. At his patron's death sir William was rector of Thornton-le-Moors, which, according to the *History of Cheshire*, he held for more than fifty years. To the living of Warrington, which sir Thomas Boteler, "out of the good love and zeal he bore him," by his will, in which he calls him his "well-beloved chaplain," destined him to have on the next avoidance, sir William, owing to some unforeseen circumstances in his patron's family, never succeeded; and in 23 Henry VII. (1507) he was a trustee in a recovery of the Legh estates in Grappenhall, and in 1526, as executor of sir Thomas Boteler, he sued sir Thomas Southworth for detaining a casket of money. He was not rich, but he loved religion, and would make sacrifices for it for its own sake. When ruin befell the friary therefore, he was grieved to think that its ancient church, dedicated to the Redeemer, and called "Jesus Church," should cease to be the resort of living worshippers, and become desolate and desecrated. Anxious, therefore, to preserve it to its hallowed purposes, he sought and obtained, either from the king or from sir Thomas Holcroft his grantee, but more probably from the former, a lease of the ancient church of the friary. How long the lease was to last, or what were its terms, we have failed to learn; but, having obtained the lease, sir William placed in the church sir John Carlisle, a priest who had probably been the last prior of Warrington, and sir Roger Okell, who as probably was one of the few brethren of the friary at the dissolution, to carry on in it the accustomed services of the church. Though poor in worldly wealth, sir William seems to have taken upon himself the expenses of this service, and his good work it appears outlived him, and shed its radiance afterwards; for in the year 1550, after he had been dead several years, sir John Lowe occurs in a list of the clergy of the Warrington deanery as officiating on the patronage, and most probably on the stipend, of sir William Plumtre, which could only have been in the friary church: Sir

William, who had been the means of preserving the church, retained his affection for it to the end, for he remembered it, with other religious objects, by a legacy in his will. This will was made on the 15th September 1545, and as it is curious we give it at length :

"I give [he says] to Maister Boteler's chapel, within the Parish Church of Werington, vis. viij*l*., and that to be disposede by the skolemaister ther and sir Robert Hall. To Ihesus Church at Werington, xxs. in money, to be ward ther by th' advise of sir John Carlile. To Maistress Clemence Hall, the salte of silver, &c., bycause halfe of the stuffe that it was bought with was herres, and besides that she shall have all her owne goodes, &c., whiche she will take upon her conscience to be herres at Hokertonne withoute lett or trouble. [From this place sir William had an annuity which had been granted him by sir Thomas Boteler ; it was near Crophill in Nottinghamshire.] To sir Robert Hall, the bookes named, *Quatuordecim Sermones*, *Ortus Vocabulorum*, and *The Shepherdes Kalender*, and the booke named *Pica*, and that to remain in Maister Boteler's chappell at Werington. To sir Roger Okell, the *Newe Testamente* in Latin, *Lilium Missæ et Pupilla oculi*. To my good maistress Elizabeth Bothe of Dunham, iij silver spoones. To Mr. Cutlier Bolde, a crowne of vs. A preste to be kepte to celebrate masse for my sawlle, my father's sawlle, and my mother's sawlle, and for the sawlles of sir Thomas Boteler and dame Margaret his wife, at Ihesus Church in Werington, for iiij yerres."

The good work of preserving and maintaining the church when the rest of the friary was destroyed, entitled sir William to the deep gratitude of his cotemporaries. By connecting sir John Carlisle with the place, and committing the fabric to him, as he does in his will, sir William probably meant posterity to infer that he was the prior of the friary at the time when the glory of the house departed, and shared in sir William's affectionate zeal for the old place. Sir Roger Okell too was probably one of the friars whom the dissolution had rendered houseless and homeless, and who loved to cling to Jesus church as to the heart of his old convent.

Over sir William Plumtre's library this inscription might very fitly have been written :

“ — Not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom.”

The list of his books gives us a glimpse of the studies of a working ecclesiastic of that day. His reading, though not extensive, seems to have been devoted to what he had to do, and to have been consistent with his sacred profession. All his books, some of which are rare and one almost unique, had reference to his duties, and show his devotion to them. Some of the books were printed, and some only in manuscript, and any of them would now be esteemed a treasure in our Warrington museum. A short account of some of them may not be wholly out of place here. The *Pica* was a liturgical book, which had been printed in 1509, and the printing type of that name is supposed to have been so called from its being first used in printing this *Pica* liturgy. (Watts's *Bibliotheca*.) Sir William's copy was probably a printed book. *The Kalender of Shepherdes*, a religious work, very different from Spenser's well-known poem of that name, was printed first in 1508 and again in 1528, by Wynkyn de Worde, “at the sygne of the sonne,” and sir William's copy of this also was almost certainly in print. What the Latin New Testament was, whether in print or in manuscript, we hardly can tell, though it was more probably a written and not a printed book, copied from the Vulgate. The *Quatuordecim Sermones* was probably the Latin treatise “On the Fourteen Beatitudes, called by theologians the Saints' Dowry, of which seven related to the body, and the like number to the soul.” This was the work of no less a personage than the celebrated archbishop Anselm. The *Pupilla oculi* was a sort of ecclesiastical *vade mecum*, professing to be necessary for all priests, especially those in England, and was written by the very learned John de Burgh,

professor of the Sacred Page, and formerly chancellor of the university of Cambridge. It treated at large of the seven sacraments, and bore the date of 1335. The *Ortus Vocabulorum* was the exceedingly rare work which was compiled and printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1500. In its lengthy title the author says his book is alike necessary for teachers and scholars, and that it explains every word to be found in the Catholic *Breviloquus*, the Cornucopia, or the marrow of grammar. What the book was which sir William Plumtre in his will calls *Lilium Missæ*, though it was no doubt some work on the mass, we have not been able to learn. Compared with the library of Martin Collins, treasurer of York in 1508 (*York Wills*, Surtees soc., vol. iv. p. 279), and with that of Evesham abbey at an earlier period, which contained a map of the world, and both the *Mort d'Arthur* and the *Sangreal* (*Penwortham Priory*, Chetham soc., p. 96), sir William Plumtre's library was very small.

According to the *History of Cheshire* sir William Plumtre must have died about the 15th November 1545, for on that day William Tatton was appointed to succeed him in the rectory of Thornton-le-Moors, then vacant by his death.

Sir William's name is not a very common one, and it is remarkable therefore to find that it was borne by another sir William Plumtre, who is called one of queen Mary's old priests, and is said to have been put to death for joining in the Northern insurrection of 1569. (Sharp's *Memorials* of that rebellion, Surtees soc., pp. 133-40.)

How long the friary church continued to be used for its original purpose after the death of sir William Plumtre we have been unable to ascertain. But from one of the Boteler papers it seems certain that it was still used for worship in the year 1592; and two manuscripts in the Harleian collection, which give an account of the arms, glass, tombs and other articles in the friary church, and one of which papers was taken as late as 1640, render it probable that the church was even then not deserted by living worshipers. (*Harl. MSS.*, 139, fo. 22; 2,129, fo. 188.)

But long after these had deserted it, its cemetery was selected as a favourite resting-place for the dead, if we may judge from the great number of bodies of all ages and both sexes, which from time to time have been discovered on the site. We may be pardoned if we regret that the ancient church of the friary, which had some noticeable architectural features and a cloud of archæological associations, has not remained to our time to supply the need there is of additional places of worship in Warrington to meet the wants of its greatly increased and increasing population.

The ancient gateway of the friary remained standing to nearly the close of the last century, but it was then removed, and with it disappeared the last vestige of the fabric of Warrington friary.

It is with great institutions as with oaks—they take a century to grow, a century to flourish in vigour, and a third century to decay, the roots being the last to die. It was so with the mendicant orders, especially the Austin friars, the most learned of them all. Riches and luxury had relaxed the rule of the great religious houses, and their example had rendered the secular clergy lax in their duties, when the mendicants came in and created a revival of religion. For a century they grew in importance and activity, and increased in numbers. Their very name introduced them to some classes of the people who were till then unreached. At this time they were active and did a good work. Then came a century of success, which insensibly brought in corruption. Another century saw their vigour decline and decay; and corruption, which began with their chief men, like friar Penketh the provincial of his order, helped to bring on the dissolution of his and of all the mendicant orders. Of the great parent house of the Austin friars in London, an historian writes thus :

“It continued to flourish for a time as one of the great humanisers which prevented mediæval society from becoming a scene of riot and misrule. It was from such walls as these that the mighty reason emanated which gave the times all that they possessed of learning, refine-

ment, and moral excellence. It was here that the various and discordant elements could, and did, unite, and where men could meet on one common ground—the ground of Christian brotherhood. Within these walls was one or more of the recognized masters in the sciences then known. Either the prior or one of the brethren was a man of celebrity, a professor at Oxford, a renowned controversialist, or an admired preacher. The Austin friary in London was thus the centre of artistic, intellectual, and pious effort, and the very name of this beautiful house was synonymous with influences that largely contributed to illuminate and dignify the age.” (Rev. Thomas Hugo’s *Lecture* on “The Austin Friars.”)

But there is ever an arrow ready on the string when a great purpose requires it. The monasteries, religious houses and mendicant orders, having done their work, had grown old and declined, and were now to be superseded by another agency, which should purify the faith from its abuses, reform the church and rouse the sleeping energies of religion to new effort. In this emergency appeared Luther, “the solitary monk who shook the world.” He was a man equal to the occasion for which he was raised up, and taking a slight liberty with the poet’s words, it may be truly said of him that he soon

“Shook the arsenal, and fulmin’d over *Rome!*”

Instead of mourning then over the departure of the religious houses and institutions which were fitted for those other ages in which they arose and lived, and which perished when they had accomplished their purpose and communicated their partial knowledge, let us, with our greater privileges and more abundant light, rejoice and give thanks that the old pageant has passed away, and that to us has been granted a religious light and liberty which former ages never knew.

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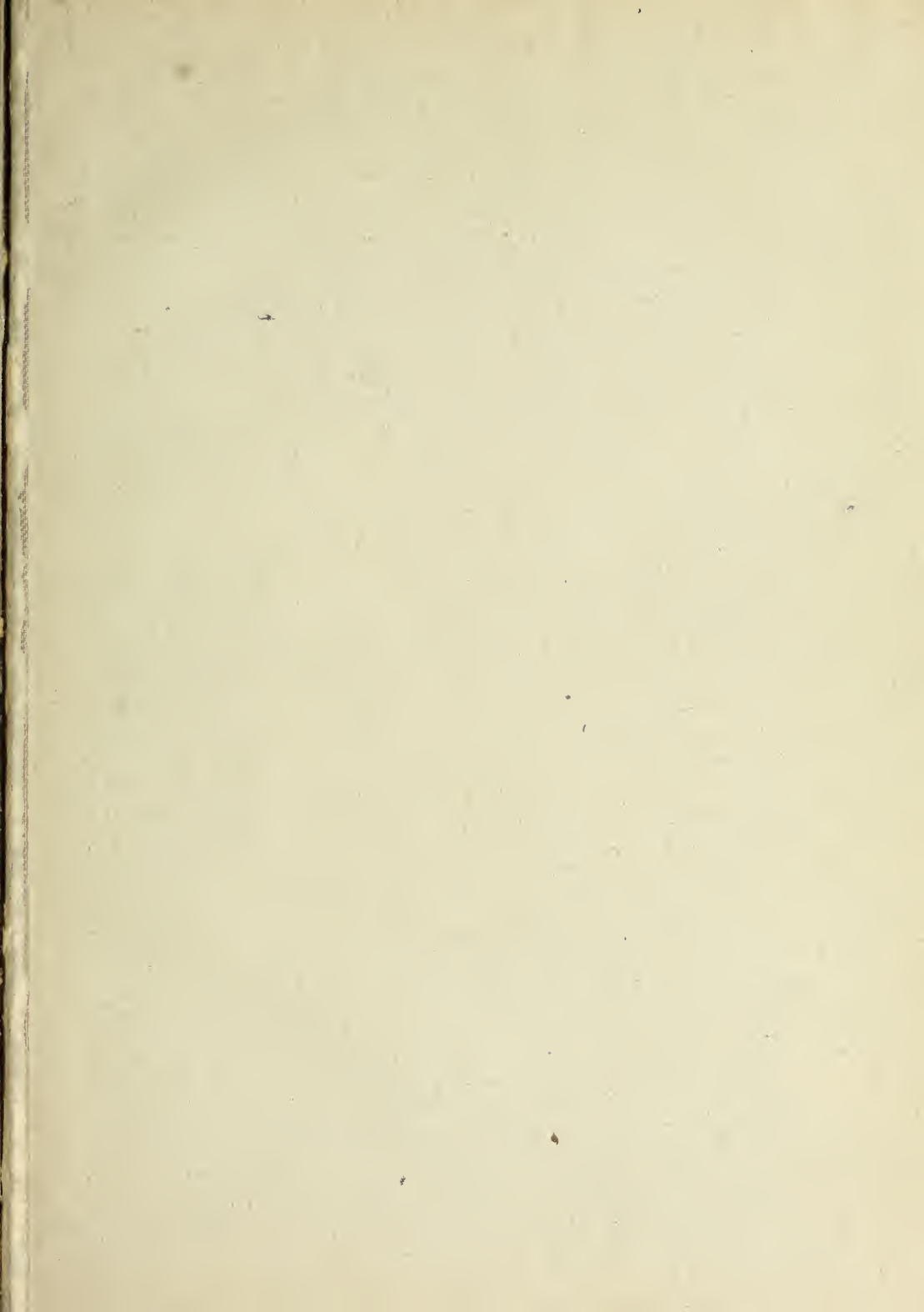
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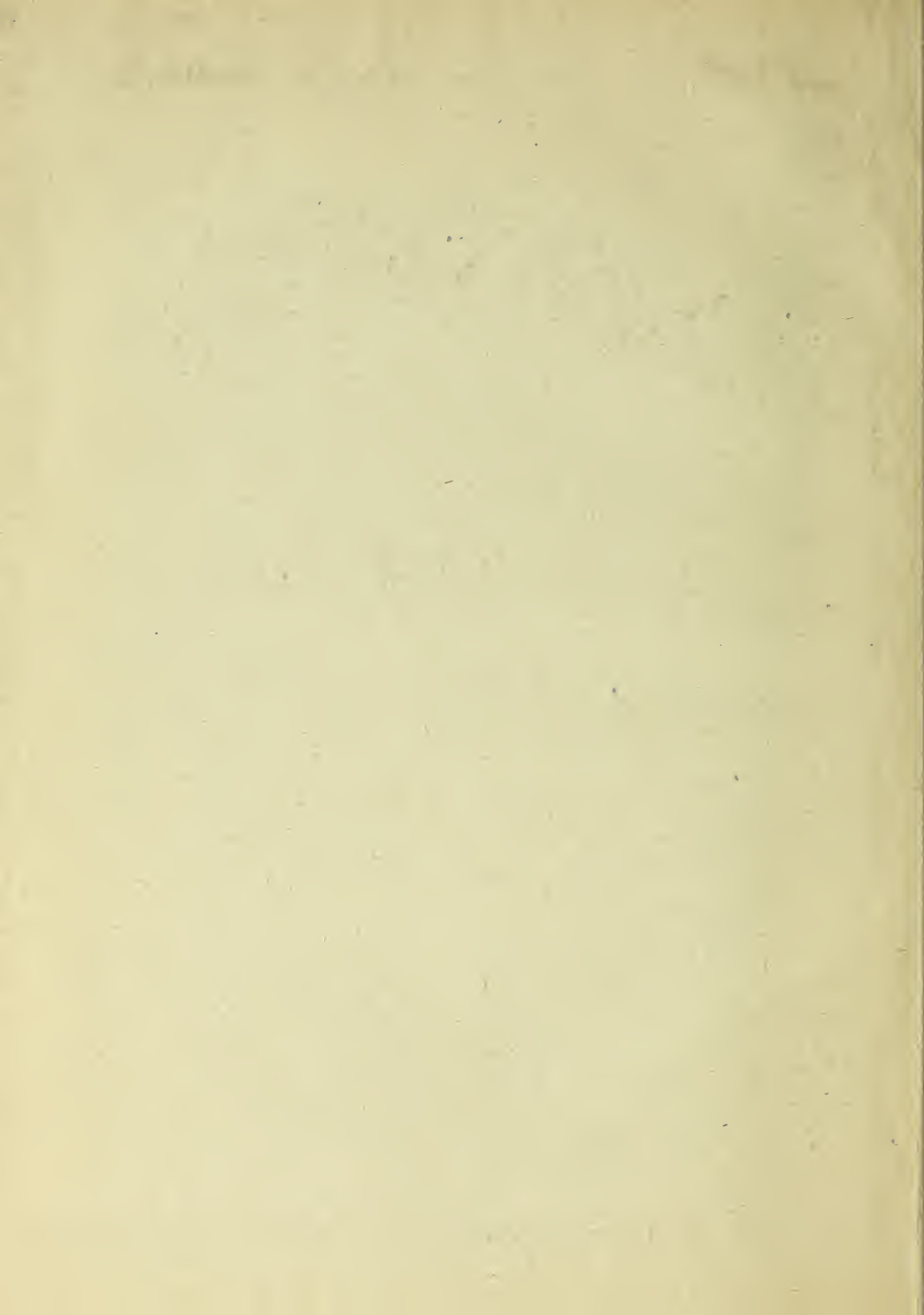
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